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To my esteemed colleague,
Dr. T. P. Stafford.

Philip Wendell Crannell

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THE SURVIVAL OF THE UNFIT

POWERS, PRINCIPLES, AND PRACTICE IN MAN-MAKING

BY

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Dedication

To the one whose sympathy, faith, and works have
been life's constant support, inspiration, and incitement,

MY WIFE,

this book is affectionately dedicated.

PREFACE

THE chapters in this volume were originally published as editorials in the *Sunday School Times,* to which paper, and to its accomplished editor, Charles Gallaudet Trumbull, grateful acknowledgment is hereby made. While covering a rather wide range of title and topic, they will be found to be expositions of one central theme, the development and operation of character under the hand of God, through the faith and work of the Christian, in his threefold relationship,—to God, to himself, and to his fellows.

They are gathered here with the hope that they may be of help to some who, in the midst of the intricate duties and difficult problems of our present-day life, are seeking to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with their God, assured that it is God who worketh in them both to will and to work, of his good pleasure.

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SUMMER

What is the soul's best season, when she makes
  Her gains of girth, and grace, and glow of flowers?
  Ofttimes it falls in Fortune's tropic hours,
And oft in grief's chill wind, that rudely shakes
Through strife to strength; each yields its guerdon fair.
  But airs of balm too often bring no bloom,
  And blasts austere both bole and blossom doom:
Deeper her Summer lies than sun or air.
  Rife with rough winds, or rich with breezes bland,
That season brings its fruitage from above,
  Scatters its graces thick on every hand,
Wins strength from softness, bloom from bitter strife,
  When through wide open gates of faith and love
Pours a full tide of God's transforming life!

I

THE SURVIVAL OF THE UNFIT

THE "survival of the fittest" is a fact as old as the law of cause and effect. It was proclaimed by our Lord when he said, "Unto everyone that hath shall be given; but from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away from him." Those individuals or species which were best adapted to their environment, or were capable of adaptation, lived, flourished, and advanced. Those which were not, or could not be made to be, perished. One observes the workings of the law everywhere, among plants and animals and men.

And yet there seem to be exceptions. We sometimes find the survival of the unfit. Some who do not at all seem to display the qualities that match their surroundings are found not only to be surviving, but to be magnificently successful. We hear of a great leader, and picture to our imagination a being strong, robust, confident, self-assertive. Ushered into his presence, we find a man weak of physique, stammering of tongue, mild of manner, an asthmatic skeleton, like William of Orange, an epileptic like Cæsar, perhaps like Paul. The revulsion of the surprise is almost ludicrous. Yet these outward weaknesses may hide a frame of steel, a heart of fire, so that the unfitness is only partial or apparent.

Often the realization of unfitness is truer because it is by the man himself. He is intrusted by God or circumstance with honors and tasks and responsibilities, and he sees nothing in himself that measures up to them. He has to act like a man of iron; he feels himself to be a man of lath. He is thrust into the battle, sword or spear in his hand, while every fiber of his nature protests against it. The situation demands qualities that he knows he does not possess. Men insist on placing him there, and he looks with incredulous wonder at them. Timid, retiring, self-distrustful, without popular gifts, he finds himself pushing some aggressive enterprise, some venture of daring boldness, perhaps in the teeth of bitter opposition, as if his face were indeed the flint he knows himself not to be. Perhaps a quiet man, a domestic man, a man of peace, he is forced to be a warrior, a world-traveler, a man of affairs. And in observing others we are at a loss, again and again, to understand how equipments such as theirs could be intrusted with such endeavors. We could have chosen a thousand men better adapted to the situation. Yet strange to relate, those who seem, and feel themselves, and are, so tremendously unfit, are not only managing to live, but are conspicuously "making good."

Is it all a travesty of the law, or at least an overriding of it? Is God's world topsy-turvy, and the law of cause and effect sometimes operative and sometimes not?

That men may for their own good know the true sources of power, God purposes to show mankind

that Jehovah can save with many or with few, and can make the weak things of the world confound the mighty. Let the successful man reflect on that! Perhaps he is simply a modern and conspicuous instance of God's power to make a thing that is not as though it were. It may be very often that the Father, willing to show at once his power and his grace, chooses to let his lightnings flash through a thing of clay. But God is not a God of caprice, and it will be found, if we look far enough, that some thread of character, found or made by God, ran through the clay, and conducted the divine electricity to its goal.

These cases may simply reveal to us the fact that God's estimate, infinitely more accurate, is also very different from ours. Few people are strong where they think they are, and very often men are not weak where they think they are. Two confessors were facing the great ordeal of martyrdom. One feared greatly that his courage would fail and that he would dishonor his Lord. The other was sure he never could. In the face of the flame they changed places. Our estimate of our own ability and fitness goes oftener astray, no doubt, in the direction of exaggeration, but sometimes it is the other way, and sometimes both. Not few have been the authors who have scorned the "potboilers," in which their most splendidly effective work was done, while they chased ridiculously some phantom of a "masterpiece." A man can often have no worse judge of his abilities than himself. Therefore if a man find himself, by no eager self-seeking of his own, in a place for which

he feels himself inadequate, why not assume that he who placed him there knows his size best, and will not desert him in his task? "Behold, I have made thee this day a fortified city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls." The brass of God's making is worth a thousandfold the "natural" variety.

It is plain, moreover, that in most things fitness is not so much a matter of equipment as of will-power. What we do and are depends little upon our equipment, much upon how we use our equipment. Power lies deeper than in equipment. Men do not see with the eye, however dull or however delicate; they see with the brain. They do not see even with the brain; they see with the mind. In the last analysis they do not see with the mind; they see with the will. The old skit at the evolutionist told a great story nevertheless:

> "A deer with a neck that was longer by half
> Than the rest of his family's—try not to laugh—
> By stretching and stretching became a giraffe,
> Which nobody can deny."

We develop new organs or make the old ones over. The will runs new grooves through the brain, almost literally makes itself a brain to its own order. Fitness, within limits, lies not in the wit, nor in the weight, but in the will. Wilt thou?

And some of us may comfort ourselves in the thought that simple proximity is one of the greatest elements of fitness. There is everything in being on the ground. A thing at hand is vastly better for God's purposes than a thing a thousand miles away.

The man seems to a good many of us, and to himself, like the jawbone of an ass, or even the ass itself, certainly no better than an ox-goad; but the Philistines are here, and the battle is on,—and the battle is won.

Therefore no man need spend much time in underestimating himself, or in estimating himself at all, or in bewailing his own weakness and looking for the thousand men who no doubt are far superior to him. All that is neither here nor there, since he is here and they are there. God knows where he is, and has put this upon him. Who is he that he should question? Let him push on, knowing that he is just the one man for that task, since he is the one man who is in it.

And let us remember that no man radiates force; he simply transmits it. He is not a source; he is a channel. The reason why God so conspicuously uses the "unfit" is because they are the more willing channels of his force. They are the poor in spirit. They are not forever thrusting themselves in the way, and shutting him out. They "give God a chance." Their very sense of unfitness casts them upon God's strength, and removes the obstacles that hinder his power,—pride and self-will and self-direction. Their very agony of helplessness is the condition of his help. He found them, or made them, more willing to be made the channels of his grace.

The survival of the unfit? Can there be a more magnificent picture of fitness than this? Behold this man, chosen by God rather than by himself, equipped, not with accomplishments and powers, but with will and purpose, surrendering his own judgment, pleas-

ure, self-estimate, at the call of need, which is the call of God, ready to do the thing that lies at hand, in touch with God and surrendered to him. Do these "exceptions prove the rule"? They *are* the rule—at its highest.

II

CHARACTER BY SALVATION

"SALVATION by character" is an attractive phrase, and a dangerous one. It does indeed suggest a valuable truth of the Christian life, and of God's dealing with the soul. "Salvation without character" may never really have been taught by any so-called gospel teachers, but many have understood them to teach it, and every rightly constituted mind shrinks from that. Nothing can be more explicit than the demand of the Scriptures for a salvation that shall be present and practical; not only a thing imputed, but a thing possessed. "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees," is the Master's specification. "Holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord," is both an Old and a New Testament requirement. John declares of the New Jerusalem that "there shall in no wise enter into it anything unclean." Therefore, in so far as the phrase "salvation by character" insists that salvation is not simply outward and legal, and that, in the end and at the root, God's laws are not to be evaded by any "legal fictions," even though we call them "gospel offers," the phrase may serve a good purpose.

But just as it reads, without careful explanation, "salvation by character" contains a dangerous fallacy, wrapped up in the various meanings of salvation

and character. It is either a contradiction in terms, or a mocking tautology.

"Salvation by character" is not salvation at all, in the gospel sense; it is evolution, development, days' labor, not salvation, rescue, grace. For salvation implies a saving force from without, a Saviour. The question of the ages is not properly, "What shall I do to save myself?" but "What shall I do to be saved?" If men have ever in the Scripture been counseled to "save yourselves from this crooked generation," it has been by accepting the salvation offered through Christ. But the popular phrase makes salvation an achievement of man, not a gift of God.

Or else the phrase is a mere truism, a mathematical equation, which leaves you where you were before,—a gospel with no "news" in it. Salvation *by* character? Salvation *is* character. The aim of all God's work with man is not to put him, as he is, into an external heaven, but to make him heavenly. Heaven would not be salvation if heaven did not imply holiness. Heaven is simply the environment appropriate to salvation when that is complete. The salvation for which God is working is the reproduction in us of the character of Jesus Christ. Salvation *is* character; character *is* salvation; and you have the meaningless and helpless tautology: "character by character"! The poor soul finds that he is engaged in lifting himself by his bootstraps. In short, this formula conceals under its specious show of reasonableness an utter absence of the needed motive power. You are as far from your goal as ever. "Let there be light," and there was light. But it was God who

said that. "Let there be righteousness," says the phrase "salvation by character," and the man who has come into bitterest experience of his own sin and helplessness exclaims, "Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death?" "Your rope's na lang eneugh," said a despairing sinner to a similar counselor. This is "salvation by formula." I asked for bread, and I received a syllogism; for power, and I got a phrase.

Turn the phrase around, however, and it glows with meaning. It is the vital bond that unites faith and works. "Character by salvation!" This places everything in its logical order. It meets all the demands of the moralist; it expresses the fullness of the gospel; it refers the power and glory of redeemed humanity to their true and glorious source. Is not this tautology also? Yes, blessed tautology, the tautology of grace, "salvation by salvation," a divine effect produced by a divine cause.

"Character by salvation" is the root-teaching of Jesus: "Ye must be born from above." It is the teaching of Paul: "Work out [or, outwork] your own salvation"—there is character—"with fear and trembling"—how little of the thoughtless confidence of the ethical-culturist or of the smug complacency of the Pharisee, ancient or modern!—"for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure,"—there is "salvation," the gracious mercy of a God whose love on Calvary "would not let us go," though it cost his Son, and whose love would not stop on Calvary, but works with us every day and hour in holy impulse and righteous deed. *This* rope

is long enough to reach to the lowest depths of human sin and need, but the heights from which it comes, and to which it lifts us, are at the topmost summits of spiritual beauty as they are seen in the Son of the Father.

This is a gospel, in very truth; the gladdest good news that could be uttered to man, for its proclamation is this: "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus shall make you free from the law of sin and of death." Into this struggling heart of yours I will put the power of an endless life, and then, as you strive to express that life, I will add strength and victory, and by my grace, working with and through your effort, you shall be changed into the same image from glory unto glory, until Christ shall be fully formed in you, and you shall be like him, for you shall see him even as he is. The beginning and the progress and the end shall be of God, the appropriation shall be by the threefold human channel, "faith, working, through love."

There is nothing mechanical or external about this; it goes to the very heart of man, as it comes from the very heart of God. It does more than satisfy an ethical demand, it gives a divine assurance of the fulfillment of our highest spiritual longing. It does not remove religion from the region of individual will and effort, it makes man a co-worker with God in his own salvation. It demands all that there is in a man, of manly purpose and love; but it vivifies and empowers that human resolution by the purpose and will of God. Here is no formal transfer of righteousness on the accepting of a formula; it is the offer of a new

relation and of the power to realize the quality and result of that relation in actual living. Here is not a thing mechanical, translation into heaven, but a thing spiritual, transformation into the heavenly.

The other conception has thoroughly proved its utter powerlessness to lift fallen humanity out of its helplessness and sin, and yet it has ministered viciously to human pride and self-righteousness. The true conception gives religion its most beautiful and helpful aspect, by removing it from the self-centered and the Pharisaic into the living and spiritual and filial. When a man sees that, work as he may,—and work he must,—he has nothing that he does not receive, that all is of grace, and gladly accepts "salvation" on those terms, he enters into real sonship; for in his initial act of faith and surrender, and in the thousand daily acts of obedience, faith, and love, he is receiving into himself the life and power of the Father. This is sonship, and nothing else is. This state of dependence, reception, and consequently of gratitude and love, is the normal state of the human spirit in its relation to the divine spirit. "Father, give me the portion of thy substance that falleth to me," is the everlasting cry of the prodigal who does not know how to be a son. "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that is mine is thine" is God's formula for sonship. Independence, in some ways, of all men, may be a sign of manhood, but dependence upon God in every way is the crown of sonship.

In this natural atmosphere of sonship, character comes to its highest. Strength, purity, self-control, increase and deepen, as obedience and love impel to

the doing of duty, the enduring of suffering, the overcoming of temptation, as becometh a son of God. Pride, ambition, envy, jealousy, self-seeking, die in that air of utter dependence where the soul longs with an increasing love for the things of God, and glories not save in the cross of Christ and the all-achieving grace of God, as, through all life's tests and trials, God's salvation works out our character.

Nothing smaller than this can be the gospel; and this is the universal gospel; the gospel for the man in the depths, smothered and drowned in his sin, for whom "salvation by character" could not come in a million years; the gospel for the moralist, seeking to reach the shining goal of Christlikeness from the impossible levels of his own achievement; the gospel for the Christian, conscious of the spaces still ahead of him, but pressing forward toward the mark. Not "salvation without character," which is absurd; nor "character without salvation," which is impossible; nor "salvation by character," which is a tautology; but "character by salvation," the triumph of God's grace in the life of man.

III

NATURE'S PARABLE OF GRACE

Does Nature Ever Forgive Broken Laws?

IT is commonly said that nature knows no forgiveness; that upon every transgression she visits her exact recompense of reward, and with her there is no remission of sins, not even by the shedding of blood. Huxley's comparison of natural law to a great antagonist at chess, benevolent on the whole, mildly wishing our welfare, but holding rigidly to the laws of the game, and exacting his penalty for every infraction, would be accepted, even by most Christian thinkers, as a fair picture of the fact. How comes it, then, that when we enter into the realm of the spirit we find another law counteracting, if not superseding, this "law of sin and death"?

It is not so. There is no contradiction, or change, only a development. Professor Drummond's greatest intellectual service, perhaps, was in reminding us that we dwell in a universe, not a "multiverse," or even a "duiverse"; that one set of laws runs through the whole. The Ten Commandments are a law of love, and so is the Decalogue of Hygiene, and the Twelve Tables of (God's) Political Economy. It was no different God who gave the Bible, or new God who gave the New Testament. To be sure, we fully perceive

that the old law is a law of love only in the light of the life and death and living power of Jesus Christ. He brought life and immortality to light. But they existed before, in the heart of God, and were at work in the world. A thousand facts and forces were more or less dimly indicating them; they came out into clear relief when he revealed them.

The abundant signs of the grace and forgiveness of God in nature might seem to be overshadowed or outweighed by the countless manifestations of the stern rigidity, and what some would call the cold and relentless certainty, of the operation of his laws. Now that we have seen the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ we are prepared to perceive, in his lower and lesser revelation of himself, gleams here and there of the same gracious smile, and realize that the great antagonist is in fact our great Partner, our great Protagonist indeed, intent, within limits and on conditions, upon winning our game for us, and eagerly seeking to prevent our errors, correct our mistakes, and repair our injuries. But the sweep of the epidemic, the roar of the tornado, the unmanning rock of the earthquake, typify so strikingly the resistless wrath of God, while the slow onset of disease as the result of broken law so illustrates his rigid justice and causality, that we have failed to perceive the mighty hand of tenderness and mercy at work in and with and through and above all the rigidity and the certainty.

"It is God. His love seems mighty,
But is mightier than it seems."

The universe is no soulless machine of law, it is the plastic instrument of a heart of love; not a maudlin love, a love that blesses "hit or miss," but a love that, while it profoundly respects justice, right, holiness, truth, also seeks to forgive and repair. There is nothing *said* about forgiveness, in nature; it is not blazoned on the sky; but what forgiveness is in the spiritual, repair is in the natural world. "Which is easier," said the Master, "to say, Thy sins are forgiven; or to say, Arise, and walk?" "But that ye may know," saith God in nature, "that there is forgiveness of sins, I say unto the sick of the palsy, Arise and walk."

We see this play of the divine grace in God's forbearance, the prophecy of his forgiveness. Nature is very patient. There may be awful penalties to be exacted when the day of grace is gone, but how long she holds her hand! No doubt each transgression is registered in the brain-cells, the nerves, and the tissues, and adds its snowflake or iceberg weight to make what shall be the avalanche that sweeps away the life, or the glacier that entombs it. Nevertheless the hour that marks the fatal point when retracing of steps is impossible, tarries many days. Even habit takes a long time to form and fasten, as if nature were saying, "While it is called to-day, repent."

More wonderful still is the way God steadily keeps at work the preventive influences. Within and without the body, he has his servants busy to counteract the evil and retard the day of fate. The warfare of the corpuscles and the microbes repeats on the bodily battleground and in the earth-sphere the campaign of

Michael and his angels against the host of evil. In the wholesome excitements of life, in its fresh air and sunshine, in the countless influences of good, moral, spiritual, physical, he is battling for us, that we may not be overcome. Evil bacteria would overrun the world in a week, but God's microscopic champions are also in the field. In every sphere it is marvelous to see how in one way or another the evil that you had expected to see dominant and exultant finds the world sterile before it. You cannot see God, perhaps, anywhere, but somehow

"He is most at work, when most invisible."

Prevention, however, most clearly typifies providing grace; it is repair that shows forgiving grace. Analyze his ways of working how we will, we discover that God is not content to let the infraction of law work itself out in an undeflecting mathematical process whose end is physical annihilation. At almost every stage he stands by to inject life, so to say. The great French surgeon had inscribed over his operating-room: "I wound, God heals." Slash goes the surgeon's knife among the delicate internal organs; he takes a stitch or two if need be, then closes the incision, and leaves it. To what? If there were not something to leave it to, more than the clumsy hand of man can compass amid those delicate cells, there would be no help in surgery. To God, who heals! This *vis medicatrix naturae,* the healing power of nature, the physician's and surgeon's one resource, is God's incarnate forgiveness; nothing short of a miracle, but repeated so often that we call it natural.

There is no wound that this unseen living and loving force does not seek to close with healthy flesh, no disease it does not seek to cure, no pang it does not seek to dispel. In the emotional, and in the mental world, God is similarly at work, or this world would be a prison or a hell. No forgiveness in nature! Every hospital denounces it as a slander, every convalescence convicts it, every sleeping chamber, where nightly the sweet restorer "knits up the ravell'd sleave of care," laughs it out of court.

So wonderfully potent is this reparative force of God in nature that it is almost possible to be "born again," physically. It is indeed possible, and all too common, to sin away one's physical day of grace. There are damages one may inflict upon the body which are beyond the ordinary physical grace of God to remedy. Yet most marvelous cases have been known, where a bodily "right about face," a death to the old sinful way of living, a walking in dietetic and hygienic "newness of life," has brought tone, power, soundness to the tissues and added years to the life. The man physically might have said with the hymnist,

> "Depth of mercy, can there be
> Mercy still reserved for me?"

And there was.

It is very true that the process is likely to be slow. The evil took long in the making; it will take long, but—here is another instance of God's forgiving grace in nature—not so long, in the mending. God is speedier in his healing than in his wounding. It is with reluctance he sees the prodigal depart into the

far country; patiently and persistently he seeks to postpone the evil day among the swine; but "while he is a great way off," he sees the returning son, and runs and falls on his neck and kisses him. It is very true, also, that the healing process is not always painless, that he must use counter-irritants, the knife as well as the balm, and that enforced rests, long imprisonments, weary deprivations and exacting disciplines must often be undergone. But these are just the remedies the great Healer uses in the spiritual realm also. He must wound if he is to make alive, shut up if he is to release.

These curative forces of God, likewise, for their best effect, await our own intelligent, obedient, and thoroughgoing co-operation. In the physical world they are more impersonal than in the spiritual, because physical nature itself is impersonal. They work on, along general lines, and one must learn how to take advantage of these general trends by adapting himself to them. For full physical effect there must be full physical obedience, and he who is ignorant of the laws of reparative hygiene will fail to get the completeness of God's bodily pardon. But this too is measurably true in the world of spirit. "First things first," and God has already given us in the Scriptures spiritually what he is now teaching men through the slow advance of medical and other science in the so-called "natural" world.

And, of course, what he is there accomplishing, so far, is but a faint image of his wonders in spiritual redemption. The healing, the "new birth" of the spirit, overshadows and outshines the earthly healing

and regeneration of the body, but neither has yet reached its goal, and for himself the Christian looks forward to the "adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body," when the physical grace of God shall be brought to glorious perfection, and for the general scheme of things, he awaits that day when the whole creation, which groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, shall share in the liberty of the sons of God.

Meanwhile, his heart may thrill with the thought that "The Lord our God, the Lord is One"; that what he is in spirit, that he is in nature; and that every day, every hour, every second, in every living thing, he is proclaiming that his tender mercy and compassion are over all his works. The laws of nature are laws of grace. Our Father's face shines through them all.

IV

THE WEAKEST LINK

IS it true that "a chain is no stronger than its weakest link"? Literally, yes. As a statement of physics it cannot be gainsaid, if one is speaking of a simple chain. Strain can be resisted or pull exerted only along a line of cohering particles. The particles outside that line may be many and weighty, but for the purpose of pull or resistance they are nothing. Therefore the smallest cross-section and the weakest coherence represent the actual strength. Indeed, the fact is even stronger. The chain is weaker than its weakest link, for those particles which are outside of the continuous lines of coherence add no strength, but do add the pull of their useless weight, and so demand from the weakest link a portion of the strength that should be applied to the external burden.

As a figurative statement of a fact of legal righteousness it is true, "Whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is become guilty of all." If a man presents himself before God on a basis of his actual desert, and expects to earn salvation, he must offer an obedience and a sinlessness absolutely complete and without a flaw. He has chosen that method of approach to God; he is borne up by his own strength; he casts the bridge of his own righteousness over the chasm between himself and

God. Its success depends on its completeness. The strength of every part is no greater than that of any part. When he arrives at that weak point, the bridge bears up just what that will bear, and no pound more. It breaks with him, and the strength of all the rest is of no avail. He has fallen short of the glory of God.

As a warning against carelessness and an incitement to intenser struggle, the saying has high value. You are never safe while that weak point remains. No matter how strong your walls are in other quarters, you might almost as well not have them, for thick walls here keep out no enemy there. Absolute strength at every point is the essential of victory. The walls of a ship may average a foot thick, but if in many places they are two feet thick, and in one an eighth of an inch, her voyage will be short. Achilles' mighty sinews and mystic invulnerability cannot save him when once the enemy finds his unguarded heel. The inch-wide chink lets in the fatal shaft. All this is true and important.

It is in the implications and inferences and the silences of the saying that its falsehood lurks. It tends to produce too severe judgments. It engenders discouragement. It is not true. In this world, where the divine pity and the divine helpfulness bend over us and beat with mighty tides against our hearts' doors, it is not true. In the eye of divine love, appreciation, and mercy, a chain is not only stronger than its weakest link, but it is often much stronger than its strongest link. For purposes of warning and for purposes of appraisal, where men insist on that method, God judges

men by their weakness, but for other purposes and in other connections he judges them sometimes by their average strength, sometimes by the greatest, sometimes by their aggregate, and sometimes by much more than that.

Christ's appraisal of Peter, for example, was founded, not on his denial, or his rash officiousness, or his frequent failure of real sympathy with the higher aims of the Master, but on his discerning and generous confession and loving earnestness, and more on their future promise than on their present value. In the very man who is so soon to deny him he sees the one who is capable of "strengthening the brethren" when he shall have "turned again." In his rash, impetuous, heady follower he sees "the rock" of steadiness. In like fashion the emphatic and magnificent testimony to John is called forth by the very questioning that showed such surprising weakness in the great forerunner. To John himself he transmits a gentle rebuke and warning, "Blessed is he whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me," but to the standers-by he announces his appraisal of the man who has felt in the prison the tremors of doubt: "Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not arisen a greater than John the Baptist." In the older day, David is a conspicuous example of God's method. His appraisal is not based on his dark hours of blood and lust, but on his love for God's law and house, his longing after purity, his trust in God. In the light of these things he is a "man after mine own heart." So with Abraham, so with Jacob. God saw in these

men something larger than they were at their smallest, something vastly larger than anything they actually were at their largest.

The idea that for purposes of resistance or accomplishment I am no stronger than my weakest link is a blind fallacy, for it omits a premise,—more than one. It is blind to the complex nature of man, the effect of different qualities upon each other. I am not a single chain. I am a congeries of chains, not merely parallel, but interlinked and interwoven, intertwined and intertwisted. My real strength is determined by the interplay of the weaker elements with the stronger, and the reverse. I am not a chain, but a cable, and a cable each strand of which not only bears its quota of the strain, but can communicate *laterally,* if one may so say, of its own strength, or weakness, to its fellow-strands. Tendencies counteract each other. Qualities control or modify. Estimates of tensile strength that do not give due weight to this exceeding complexity are unworthy of consideration. When phrenology was given more credit than to-day, the skillful reader of "bumps" did not venture to announce the aptitude or character of his subject from the size of any one organ, but waited to weigh and balance and calculate resultants. Destructiveness might be balanced by some opposite, passion held in check by reason or will, acquisitiveness by benevolence. I am not as weak as that moral infirmity of mine, or that evil trait. I am only as weak as that is, modified by love, truth, honor, faith. The man who surrenders to such a weakness surrenders before he has reviewed his garrison. "See

that jaw?" said one who had failed once and again in the struggle for right. "How can a man with a jaw like that ever amount to anything?" But he might if he had only had a head! They used to point out to Socrates that, according to his own Greek notion of the identity of the good and the beautiful, his goggle-eyes and misshapen head betokened an evil soul. He acknowledged the fact, but said that his high thought and pure life were due to the restraining influences of philosophy and the power of his "daemon." Bring up all your reinforcements, O struggler! Let reason, will, love, honor, send their forces across, in front of, through and through, that breach in your fortifications, and you shall conquer yet.

This fallacy is blind to a greater thing. It is blind to the grace of God. Someone was kind enough to inform Chalmers that he had "the leens of a rascal." Like the old Greek, the great Scotchman did not deny the charge, but remarked that, if he had been able to overcome those tendencies, as he hoped he had, it was by the grace of God. Paul says, "When I am weak, then am I strong." It is as true if we change the adverbs, "Where I am weak, there am I strong." The successful assaults of Satan are not made at our weak places, but at points where, in fancy and in fact, our natural strength is greatest, and which therefore are left unguarded and uninforced. It was up the impregnable Heights of Abraham that Wolfe made his way to victory. It was on his strongest side that Moses sinned. The knowledge of a weakness may make that the strongest point in all our lines.

If it means that we thrust out before that broken wall the strength of Jesus Christ, it means that there we are stronger than our strongest. "Blessed is the man who feareth alway." It is said that the branded cattle on our Western ranges "favor" the wounded side by lying on the other till a habit is formed. Then the skin on the side that has been burned, being exposed to wind and sun more than the other, becomes the thicker and firmer. Unhappy is the man who is only as strong as his strongest link. He will snap one day. Thrice blessed is he who is as strong as his weakest, when that is reinforced by the grace of God.

V

GOD'S UNCOMFORTABLE COMFORTING

A CURRENT idea of comforting is that it is cossetting, coddling, the giving of an anodyne. Nor is this wholly unfounded. So long as we live in a world of sin and pain and weakness, that kind of comfort will never be entirely unnecessary or outgrown. There is no virtue in pain, in itself considered. God does care whether his children suffer,—"in all their affliction he was afflicted,"—although there is one other thing for which he cares much more. When his will for his own is fully wrought out, he "shall wipe away every tear from their eyes." Besides, there are pains so great that the shock of them would kill, and so he mercifully gives an anodyne; he deadens the pain, or he takes us into the arms of his pitying love and croons away our dread and grief.

Nevertheless, the true and permanent comforting is more than this. Anesthesia is but a temporary expedient. It disguises pain, but the thing that produces the pain too often remains. The only permanent and safe relief comes from the restoration of the organs and tissues to their normal state. They were starved, or engorged, or diseased; they must be fed, renewed, made healthy. "Comfort," by its etymology, is

"strengthening." The "Comforter" is not, of course, the "consoler" merely, or chiefly. He is the "strengthener."

This process of bringing back the tone to depleted or diseased tissues is, in the nature of things, often painful, and especially so in the spiritual world, because the very things concerned are mind and heart and will, and their consciousness is essential to any real effect here. A man cannot be chloroformed into insensibility while you take out his heart of stone, like a troublesome adenoid, and substitute a heart of flesh. In that operation, whatever our theory of God's action may be, in some stage or other the heart itself is intensely active. God cannot bring about in us the full results for which he strives without the use of pain. "If ye are without chastening, then are ye . . . not sons."

One of God's methods of restoring health is the counter-irritant. There is a state of congestion. The cells have become engorged. In some way the blood must be withdrawn. A blister is applied. It sets up an irritation. The blood rushes to the new center of disturbance, away from the old; the engorged cells are relieved, nature resumes her normal course, pain is assuaged, cure comes. This is God's frequent and loving method in sorrow. How often the soul longs and hungers to indulge in the luxury of grief, to sink itself out of sight in the floods of anguish, to sit, still and stony, in the paralysis of sorrow, when sting! comes the sharp lash of an unwelcome necessity, of a duty now at least repulsive, of responsibilities that are most bitter, and that at first seem but to heighten

the pain. The touch of them is like salt on raw flesh; their insistence is an exquisite cruelty. No! Their insistence is life, it is tenderest mercy. That absorbing duty turns the mind away, relaxes the strained muscles, exercises the normal functions, and soon brings what thought could not, what such faith and prayer at least as that poor soul was capable of could not, the peace and rest and sanity of health. God has comforted by a sting.

A cutting or puncture is another of the uncomfortable comfortings of God. Diseased or perverted matter has gathered where it sets up a continual irritation; it is producing fierce and agonizing pain,—or, worse, is spreading its poison through all the streams of life. It must be removed, or there will be deepening disease, even death. Puncture is not pleasant. Who has not walked about with an aching tooth because he could not face the forceps? How awful the word "cut" sounds in a sensitive ear! Yet puncture, incision, is the only road to health. This disease cannot be healed by absorption. Absorption spreads it. The cut cures it. That puncture of our swollen pride will save us from many a sting and many a raving of delirium. The wreck of that ambition, whose unholy goal or unholy pathway would have meant spiritual death, has been the blessedest thing that has ever come to us. A young man was arrested in the mid-career of a life of dashing and showy sin by a fatal though lingering disease; later he shed tears of joy and gratitude for that fierce thrust of the lancet of his God which had saved his soul. Many others have done the same. More than one,

almost spoiled by wealth, has been rescued, not alone from anxieties and jealousies and heartburnings, but from spiritual ruin, by that same strenuous surgery. It was grievous, none could doubt; but it yielded the peaceable fruits of righteousness.

God's restorative treatment is not all surgery; but the positive sort, on which he principally relies, is sometimes as painful as the other. The pain in this case is that of returning health and strength. The deadened nerves are being made sensitive, the paralyzed muscles are receiving power, broken bones are knitting; into the veins and arteries, contracted by disuse and disease, is flooding the tide of new life. The nerves quiver at the unwonted stimulus, the muscles rebel against the unaccustomed exercise, the hardened vein-walls resist the incoming currents. As these currents sweep through they find many things imbedded in the life, and these in turn, like the demon at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration, resist with vigor, and when they have to go, go tearing. The man who has been frozen begs his rescuers to desist the tortures they are inflicting; the return of life to those shrunken cells is exquisitely painful,—as painful as the languor of oncoming unconsciousness was delicious. The warfare of the Spirit against the flesh makes the young Christian feel sometimes as if he were that man whose last state was worse than the first. The maturer believer, awakening from some long lapse of torpor, or sloth, or worldliness, finds the working of the Spirit of life a rackingly uncomfortable thing. His bones wax old—so it seems to him—with his roaring all the day long. In reality

they are waxing new. It is a hard thing and a bitter to put forth these new or long unused volitions. But it is life.

When we begin to feel this uncomfortable comforting of God, plainly the wise thing is not to complain and shrink and rebel. The great Physician is at work. Nor is it well to complicate the case with anodyne, which is sure to hinder. The palliatives of self-excuse, or comparison with others, only retard the cure. It is an equal mistake to try to defeat pain by either pride or will. The only thing stoicism can do here is to mask the more fearful ravages of the malady till it issues in unconquerable anguish or utter paralysis. Rather, take sides with God against yourself. Second and amend by strengthening all the motions of conscience. Resolutely put forth the new life. Give till you feel it. Crucify the old man of jealousy or pride, not as the ascetic puts his muscles to death, by disuse, but as an athlete trains down his surplus flesh, by labor at their opposites. It is said that one found himself condemned to death by that fearful enemy, locomotor ataxia. But he set his will to conquer it. His method was exercise, and exercise was agony. He forced his pain-racked limbs through the motions of life through the days and weeks and months and years, and stepped forth conqueror. Whatever of truth there may be in this as an incident of bodily healing, it accurately describes a method of spiritual cure. Again the Lord Jesus says to the man with the withered hand, "Stretch forth thy hand," and again the man obeys. Is there pain in it, shame, conscience, self-denial, self-refusal? Stretch it forth.

Just now life tingles with the torture of health returning; before long it shall thrill with the rapture of health restored.

The quicker we learn the lesson, the shorter the session with the rod. Much of our pain is unnecessary, the fruit of disobedience. We do negligently the surgical work with which God intrusts us, and we leave centers of long disease. Faith and hope and trust would much shorten and much lighten the pangs of parting disease and coming health. But the cutting out of favorite sins, the breaking up of old habits and the forming of new, the subjection and crucifixion of "the old man," will never be a painless process. Some of the best comforting will always be uncomfortable. That door of "tribulation" whereby we enter the kingdom stretches across every path. He who accepts it fully, frankly, actively, passes through it most quickly, and profits by it most gloriously; but without it the chaff never leaves the wheat.

VI

GOD'S COMFORTABLE COMFORTING

PAIN is not the only nor the favorite restorative of God. He uses it, but it would be wrong to infer that he uses it most of the time, or that he has any special fondness for it. It would seem safe to say that he never employs it if it can be dispensed with. "He doth not afflict willingly nor grieve the children of men." In many cases the pain we feel is the product of causes from without, an injury from others' error or sin, which it is the part of God's love to repair. In other cases, all that is needed for a cure is to hold the suffering in abeyance while nature heals. And sometimes sunshine is the one curative required; that gentle warmth dispels the pain, and in its glow the soul outgrows its malady.

While it is true, therefore, that "into each life some rain must fall," and that there are qualities of strength and ripeness and beauty which cannot reach their height without "a touch of frost," these are the exception, and should bear about the same proportion to the other as the few days of frost do to the long summer in the life of the fruit or the leaf. God's love is always seeking to reduce them to a minimum. His comforting is only occasionally uncomfortable; usually it is soothing, pleasant, stimulating, inspiring,

and would be even more so if we were wiser in our attitude toward it and toward him.

Over against the counter-irritant method, for example, the Father delights to use what may be called the counter-stimulant. In this case, the suffering is not that of deep inner disease, or, if its source is inner, it is the result of our own brooding. His remedy is diverted attention. If we rivet a pained and anxious thought upon almost any portion of the body, we can keep it in irritation; the pain is imaginary at first, perhaps, but it gets to be very real, and sometimes there is an actual change in the tissues, corresponding to the sensation, or to our ideas of it. How doubly true is this of the mind and the spirit, where attitude is nine-tenths of life! Imaginary ills! Yes! And, as Sir Walter Scott said of them, all the harder for that.

The cure, however, is not imaginary, though it is mental. It consists in drawing or directing the thought elsewhere,—" the expulsive power of a new affection." A thought or a feeling which fills the mind cannot be summarily dismissed; it must be driven or drawn away. The quality of the counter-stimulus is not the important factor, so much as the force of it. A blister may do it, but why not a blessing as well? When the lady asked the boy if he were not cold, he answered, " I was, ma'am, till you smiled." We are cold—till God smiles. This comforting of his assumes a thousand delightful forms. He gives us some promise to think of, and if our love is deep and our faith is strong, we have soon forgotten all about our present distress. He imparts some joy of present love

or service, and the little sting, or the great one, is lost in the outflow of thought and interest. He gives us some kindly touch of human love, some delight of nature, some of those "thoughts which do often lie too deep for tears," and the sorrow is gone, driven away by sunshine.

"'Ill and o'er-worked, how fare you in this scene?'
'Bravely,' he said, 'for I of late have been
Much comforted by thoughts of Christ, the living Bread!'"

And the best of this method is that God has filled the earth full of materials for it, and has put the key into our hands. We can use it at any time. Often and often we look up to the heaven with our imploring faces. "Comfort, comfort!" we say. "Our Father, give us comfort!" And he says, "Look about you, my child; there it is, flooding the earth, tracking your pathway, filling your lives, warm, rich, full,—take it!"

Instead of surgical cutting and dissection, sometimes so necessary, God often uses without it, what he greatly prefers, the infusion of blood and the quickened heart-throb. There are pain-relievers which do their work by slowing up the heart; there are others which relieve by hastening and strengthening its action. In the increased momentum, the rush and flow, the little pain-obstruction, is swept away. Now and then he lays his hand on the fevered heart, and gently checks its beating, but more often he touches it into speed. For much of our pain arises from slow pulses and weak heart-throbs. It is astonishing how the little things can cut and hurt and rankle when our

vitality is low. It is astonishing how little the cut is felt, and how soon it heals over, when we are in high health.

> "'Tis life of which our veins are scant,
> More life, and fuller, that we want."

"Love suffereth long and is kind, . . . is not provoked, . . . beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." This quickened heart-throb sometimes has its painful aspects, but as a rule it means delight. Disease, not health, brings pain; and health, welcomed, tingles with the joy of living. If pain appears, it is temporary; joy cometh in the morning. The love-cure, the joy-cure, the enthusiasm-cure, these delightsome ways are his favorite ways.

But often in his tender grace God adds another to his remedies of comfort, and that is the balm of his personal presence. There are ailments where the poor heart, though it flutters wildly, is so weak that a narcotic, slackening its throb, would hush it into a quiet from which there could be no awaking, and a stimulant would rudely snap the slender hold on life. Medicine is out of the question. Then the Physician himself is the medicine. He comes with his calm, his confidence, his sympathy, his will-power, the magnetism of his own perfect health, and in an hour the pain is gone, the disquiet is over, the flutter has ceased, and the sufferer has sunk into the sweet slumber as of a little child.

And God knows that our hearts have got so entangled with our miseries that we cannot get them

loose. He knows that our heart-beats are very feeble, and we are very weary. He is not dealing with lifeless machines or deathless angels, but with poor, weak, tired, failing men and women. And so he brings the throb of his great heart against ours; its warmth allays our fever, its calm soothes our fluttering, it puts its own strength into us, and we are whole. In the sweet, old-fashioned phrase which may we never forget, he "speaks peace to our soul."

"But what to those who find?
Ah this, nor tongue nor pen can show!
The love of Jesus, what it is,
None but his loved ones know!"

But he has not put us to sleep. He has awakened every power to fullest exercise, he has quickened us into new life, he has thrilled us into the likeness of his own love and joy, sometimes with a rapture that earth seems hardly able to endure,—but there is life in every thrill. That is the way God comforts, the way he delights to comfort, if we will let him.

In both sorts, God's uncomfortable and God's comfortable comforting, the great secret is to catch his thought and work with him. To seize on the good and pleasant things that throng the world about these saddened hearts of ours, to catch up and build upon his promises, to plunge into life with quickened interest and love, to open the soul to that healing Presence,—these make the heart sing aloud with the Psalmist:

"Bless Jehovah, O my soul,
And all that is within me, bless his holy name; . . .
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;

Who healeth all thy diseases;
Who redeemeth thy life from destruction;
Who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies;
Who satisfieth thy desire with good things,
So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's!"

Then we go forth to comfort our fellow-men "through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

VII

PRESENT-DAY HOLINESS

A FATHER, lately writing to his daughter on her eighteenth birthday, wished for her a womanhood not only happy and useful, but *holy*. It was a new word for her everyday vocabulary. She had heard of fine women, splendid women, good women, but holy womanhood had an old-time sound, strange to her twentieth-century ears. Assuredly we are not hearing the word as often as our fathers did. We should not be very likely to speak of any Christian man or woman of to-day, private or public, obscure or eminent, admirable though he or she might be, as "holy." Strong, true, consecrated, noble, pure, but hardly holy. What does the difference portend?

Some would say that the word has disappeared from our speech, because the thing has departed from our life. That it is a sign of the spiritual decadence of the time. That we are lost in worldliness, materialism, sin. That the love of the many has waxed cold. That white purity, supreme devotion, absolute surrender to God and complete absorption in the things of the Spirit, is not able to endure the fever of our sin, the chill of our indifference. That we have not vitality enough to desire or endure anything above a minimum or average religion.

But a fair view of the religious world to-day, giving

due weight to both bad and good, hardly justifies this charge. The amount of real goodness, active charity, and whole-hearted devotion among Christ's people was never greater. Never was there a juster apprehension of the length and breadth and height and depth of what it means to be a real Christian. Never were there so many earnest men and women seeking to do Christ's will. Probably never have so many been inquiring that will as found in his Word and revealed by his Spirit.

This disuse of the word "holy," however, is not a mere vagary of the popular tongue whereby a term is temporarily dropped for no particular cause, to be taken up again for no better reason. It is a symptom, a very cheering symptom, on the one hand, and a symptom which points out a very grave defect and danger on the other.

It indicates a wholesome change in our conception and practice of religion. The old use, not the full scriptural idea by any means, implied that religion was separation from the things and interests of earth. To be holy was to be "set apart," with most decided emphasis on the "apart." It meant not only different standards, different practices, and a different relation to God, but a different place of living. If it did not mean, as it never wholly did, a certain sanctimoniousness, it did suggest a white aloofness, still contemplation, mystic communings with God, a life spent so exclusively in his thought and service that the demarcation between its course and the world's was clear and distinct. And, while this latter was not of its essence, the outer look and manner, perhaps

even the garb, indicated the difference. The names of a dozen or a hundred ancient and medieval "saints" occur to one.

But that sainthood, beautiful, sweet, admirable as it was, is not the sainthood of Jesus Christ, of the tireless worker who went about doing good, who mingled intimately with the nobility and the rabble in palace and street, and whose hands touched the bier of the dead, the eyes of the blind, and the rough skin of the leper. We no longer have the idea, and God grant we may never get it again, that to be nearer God is to be farther away from the people. The God we worship to-day, the God of the Scriptures, is an immanent God, and he can be served only by an immanent people, interwoven inextricably with the lives of the men and women they are set to serve.

We are translating our religion into terms of daily life, and asking ourselves the question that a certain old Hebrew Christian asked his readers, "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" We are putting over the pulpits of our churches the inscription, "To the Glory of God Through the Good of Man." And so it comes about that we are seen more in the hospital than in the oratory, more among the poor than in the temple, more in the civic and social movements than in the still cell of the mystic. And this is in full accord with the Master's "Inasmuch," and with the prayer he gave us to answer partly ourselves, "Thy will be *done*."

The modern religion, as we call it,—although the complete religion in every age has been this,—con-

sists not in denials but in affirmations, not so much in abstaining from things as in employing things for the glory of God and using them to shape in human lives his image. Our question is not how few we can touch, but how many we can control and use. We are ambitious, in our sphere and measure, to make *all things* work together for good. The Christian life, in our conception, is not a tall, straight, slim pillar reaching heavenward, and only accepting breadth, thickness, and weight because there is no other way on earth to produce a perpendicular, but it is a globe that includes within its perfect round every interest of life, glorified and ennobled by the presence of God.

Our holiness is wholeness, full-rounded manhood and womanhood, from which nothing essential to manhood or womanhood can normally be left out. We realize that there are still junctures even in our modern life, and always will be on earth, when we must carry out the command, "If thy right hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off"; we may have to sacrifice or suppress some faculties of the body or mind to give the spirit its full chance of development. But we also realize that these cases are abnormal and ought to be exceptional, that "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." He is the consummate Christian who is the complete man. And the real size and stage of the Christian will be measured by the largest share of Christian motive and achievement he can put into the most inclusive sphere of healthy, happy, natural human living. He is a growing child in his father's house, and as he gains his manhood's stature, restraints fall off.

His sainthood is not sequestered, it is eminently of the open, tangible, a "creature not too bright or good [which is impossible] for human nature's daily food." Hawthorne sees Phœbe Pyncheon going to church: "In her aspect there was a familiar gladness, and a holiness you could play with, and yet reverence it as much as ever. She was like a prayer, offered up in the homeliest beauty of one's mother tongue." The holiness you cannot play with there is something wrong with; it is wrung, twisted, awry. It is not whole, and what there is of it is not sound; it is defect and deformity, not health. It is not a holiness like John's in his old age, who could relax the bowstring of care and thought by playing with a little bird, or like the Master's, who could note the flowers in their bloom and the boys and girls in their play.

Yet the symptom of losing the old word is not wholly good. We ought to have put in the new-old meanings; but we ought to have kept the word itself. The loss may show that we are a little afraid of God, or at least unused to go to him. We are not as well acquainted with him in some ways as we used to be. Like Martha, we are getting cumbered with much serving. It *is* possible that now and then the best thing we could do to please Jesus and serve men would be to stop working and sit at his feet a while. We are running very diligently and swiftly, but perhaps we need first to stay and hear what message he intrusts to us.

It may be questioned whether the bustling minister or Christian worker with his finger in a dozen pies, diplomat, politician, reformer, sociologist, man of

affairs, *errand boy,* is altogether so much more admirable in God's sight than the still saint in his cell on his knees in mystic contemplation of his Lord. He certainly is not if he has not found time and strength in his busy life to immerse himself in the presence and Spirit of God, day by day. For what men need supremely is neither politics, civic reform, Sunday-schools, soup kitchens, or sociology; it is to come into touch with the living God. Our very service will otherwise degenerate into a new Pharisaism, more hopeless in its smug self-satisfaction, and inner deadness, than the old. And the fountains of all this beneficence to man will dry up unless they are fed from the deep sources of the life of God, which never yet found their way into human hearts except through channels dug deep by prayer and aspiration and passionate seeking after God. We want that word back in our vocabulary, filled with the modern meanings, but not missing the old high sweetness. It is God's word, and we must not lose it. Out-of-date holiness is out of date, of course; but with all our philanthropy, reform, beneficence, practicality, we need a profounder life, hid with Christ in God, speaking forth on the housetops what it has heard in the closet, supreme consecration, deepest communion, translated into whole, hearty human living, the living, working holiness of Jesus Christ.

VIII

THE DUSK OF FAITH

IS there one of us who has not sometimes felt, and wondered at, the teasing uncertainty of life? The outlines of things seem so misty, where we so much desire and need distinctness and clearness. Life's verdicts are so often "Scotch verdicts": not quite "Guilty," not quite "Innocent," but "Not Proven." Why were not the things we most need to know made absolutely unmistakable? It would surely have been ever so much more satisfactory if the Father had blazoned his existence on the sky so that none could doubt. Why must we have our long debates as to whether a man can be a Christian and prosper in our modern world of business? And why are questions of duty left so intricate? It may be that "duties never conflict," but why do they so often have to be balanced? We seem to be walking in a twilight zone, a tantalizing dusk.

But a world in which every truth was so absolutely demonstrated that it could not be gainsaid, where the pathway was so clearly marked out by precept, and infractions were punished so promptly by clear consequences that there were no real choice for right's sake alone, but a man was simply forced into one road, would not be a moral world. Huxley thought that if the chance were given him of being so made that he

would inevitably think and say and do just the right thing he would gladly accept. But with all his spiritual deficiencies, Huxley was just the sort of man who would draw back from such a proposal. It would make him a mere automaton, who does not do the right at all, but only the mechanical. For *right* implies choice.

The chief need and advantage, however, of the twilight zone of uncertainty is that it affords the opportunity and makes the demand for *faith*. Faith is man's ideal relation to God, the atmosphere in which the spirit makes its girth and grows its flowers and fruit. It is in the twilight zone alone that faith can grow and be nurtured; for the fruit of the noonday is knowledge, not faith.

Faith is "trustful reliance on God." It is acceptance of God's word, where that word has to be trusted simply because it *is* God's word, not because we can see under and over and through it and beyond it, and mathematically prove its truth. Faith is reliance upon the teachings and promises of God when their fulfillment does not yet appear. It is reliance to the point of absolute surrender and obedience, although the way is dark and the foes are frightful. More than that, it is the response of the heart of a son to the heart of a father. Sonship is thinking God's thoughts because he thinks them, doing God's will because it is his will, and recognizing the Father day by day, not by virtue of the outward show of things, but by inward vision.

Here is the need and the profit of the twilight zone. It gives the opportunity to show and develop our per-

ception of God. "We know that if he is manifested we shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is," and we get royal practice in discerning his face now amid the dubious things of earth. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah." Blessed are we when increasingly we can read his message and hear his will, and see his face, in sky and sea and circumstance, in joy and sorrow, in his written Word and in the face of Jesus.

The dusk is our opportunity to make the supreme choice of him, of eternal right in him, just when at the present it *is* uncertain to our apprehension whether right does pay, just when there seems a question, after all, whether—

"Behind the dim unknown
Standeth God within the shadow, keeping watch above his own."

This was Job's opportunity, when his soul rocked and swayed before the blasts of Providence, his friends' unjust accusations and inadequate consoling, and his own perplexity and uncertainty, and he defied all the arguments of his friends, all the bitterness of his own soul, all the apparent injustices of God, in his supreme confidence that God would right him, his supreme trust, above all appearances, in that infinite justice. "Where are you going, my good woman, with that torch and that pail of water?" "I am going to burn up heaven and put out hell that henceforth men may serve God for himself alone." Can it be that God himself lets the glories of heaven grow less luminous and the gleams of hell less lurid, that men may choose him supremely, whether or no hell awaits rejection and heaven awaits choice?

And so we have our magnificent opening for that venture by which alone faith grows sturdy. Faith without exercise is a feeble thing. Faith that is venture cannot be exercised where there is no chance to venture. The element of reliance, not in this case on the idle caprice of so-called chance, but on the power and love and faithfulness of the Almighty God of promise, would be absent where every path was marked out, where every appearance was favorable, where success at once began to mature.

The dusk, again, furnishes us a perfect gymnasium for the exercise of that complete oneness in thought and will and purpose which puts the details of the unknown into the Loved One's hands, accepts and builds upon his statements as to the facts our knowledge never could attain, and acquiesces in his silence as to the things we are not yet to know. Surely, there can be few sights more lovely and more touching in the eyes of the great Father than this implicit confidence, and surely also there can be but one thing that can give to the soul more growth into sweetness, strength, and oneness with the Father than such trust. "He will care for the unknown future. He knows the unknown connections of things. He will work out the details. I have only to trust and obey." Reverently may we say it; not the full glories of heaven can produce the richest blooms upon this flower. It grows only in the twilight zone of earth.

Nor is this the richest flower, quite. The twilight zone gives us our opportunity to get nearest to our Elder Brother. We may not say what is the fullness of heaven's companionship with him. It were folly

to compare. But is it too much to say that the richness of heaven's companionship depends upon and can be approached only through this? It is given us that we may become acquainted with him. In these shadows we come to know him. To such faith as this he responds. In the dusk of the morning he stands on the shore—"Children, have ye aught to eat?" And John whispers, "It is the Lord." Each perplexity draws us to him. Each disappointment makes us lean on the undisappointing One. We turn from the uncertainties to his certitude. As, again and again, reason and knowledge fail to reveal the outlines of the objects at which we look, the path we should travel, we put our hands in his for guidance. We would not change the lessons we learn, and the sweetness of his presence in these twilight hours with him, for all the glare of the hard noontide of any mere intellectual knowledge that could be given us. Many things we do not know, but we know him.

"So I go on not knowing,—I would not if I might;
I would rather walk in the dark with God than go alone in the light."

But it is not the dark. Faith's twilight is morning's dusk, not evening's. In this blessed exercise with him faith brightens toward the noontide, as the dawning light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. "He that followeth me shall not walk in the darkness, but shall have the light of life." Walk with Jesus, and doubts of immortality disappear, for he on whose breast we lean,—is he not he who was dead, and behold, he is alive forevermore? And do

we not feel in him the power of an endless life? To the living faith God's existence *is* blazoned on the heavens; it is read in star and flower; but that scroll may be, and shall be, blotted out. He has written it on that which shall never die, the deathless heart of the redeemed. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Nor shall any doubt the triumph of right, as he looks into the face of the strong Son of God who says, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome." And this noontide of Christian faith is never reached at once. The earth, and the soul, rolls into glory through the dusk.

IX

REWARDS THAT CANNOT FAIL

REWARDS are of two kinds; those that may come, and those that are sure to come. Certain results, for example, usually follow our fidelity, toil, devotion. They form a large share of the delight of service, God's gracious earnest of completer things, the refreshing lesser fountains of strength along the way. But frequently these do not appear for long stretches at a time, and when they do appear, they may be sadly mingled and imperfect. He who would find his chief satisfaction and support in them must confess their frequent inadequacy. They fail him when he most needs them,—he would say, when he most deserves them. They are absent when they are most expected.

Human gratitude is a delightful recompense for loving service. But the very best and truest work may not procure it. Just that kind of work sometimes effectually prevents it. "Where are the nine?" is the disillusionizing question, now and then, of every benefactor. And without cynicism, the stream of gratitude is quite often badly mixed; in its sincerest thanks there is apt to be a strain of selfishness, if not of calculation and a "lively sense of favors yet to come." He would be foolish who insisted upon an accurate analysis of each draught of gratitude,—or depended upon it for his sole reward.

From some points of view the satisfaction of success may be held to be a higher sort of reward; but an immense amount of good and faithful work is sure not to attain it. If "of fifty seeds, nature brings but one to bear," no man need be surprised if his best endeavor occasionally fails to reach the goal, or if, when he reaches it, he finds that it is not the clear-cut, unmingled good that he expected.

The sense that, whether successful or not, you are doing good work, is very sustaining, until you catch a vision of the work that is being done by others, or that might be done by you; and you grow sick and disheartened at your greatest successes. The heartiest words of praise are hollow in your ears, almost mockery, as the heights of possibility loom up before you; and this feeling is likely to deepen and grow more intense as you advance in skill, power, and perception. Yet no one would care to be swept out of it into the comfortable delusion, now and then to be seen, of amiable and blear-eyed satisfaction with our work. Discontent is often the divine reward of really good work.

Well, then, there is the feeling that you have done your best. Gratitude has missed you, success has eluded you, your work falls short of your own ideal; but, come what may, you have the consciousness that you have put forth the last atom of your strength, strained the last muscle, employed your supremest power. But have you? Is there not a paralyzing sense that you have not measured up even to your own possibilities? More than once you have "stayed for the other pin," failed to "go the second mile,"

"offered a sacrifice with leaven." Others may say, "Well done," but your own heart must exclaim, "Alas, alas, unprofitable servant."

We must not let analysis entirely rob these very real and very precious rewards of the genuine sweetness that is in them, but we must not be surprised when they fail in whole or in part. What, then, are the unfailing rewards, the joys "no one taketh from you"? For there are rewards and satisfactions which are not of this doubtful and inadequate sort. They are absolutely certain. God would cease to be God if they could fail.

God's unswerving rewards are, as a rule, facts rather than feelings, though the feelings often accompany, in proportion as we realize the facts. But a feeling is superficial, evanescent, an incident, never to be sought for in itself; the fact is the thing.

There is the fact, then, unshakable, enduring, that in this act of faithful loving service I am a co-worker with the great God. Imperfect, with mingled motives, erring in heart and judgment, falling short of my own ideals? All that. But, for all that, his fellow-worker, not only by my choice, but by his. What is good in my work is built into his work, a part of the glorious structure that his grace, love, power is erecting; and it catches some gleams of the glory of his achievement.

Accordingly my work has its element of real and enduring value. It did seem to me that the human smile it won was on the surface, and died away in an instant. Like the vast bulk of all human labor it was necessarily concerned with the task or need of the

moment, sped away like the wavelet of the sea, and the place thereof knew it no more. But God has built it imperishably into that eternal structure of righteousness, truth, and love. More than that, he has not only used it for some good, he has used it for the very best for which it could be used. We are prone to feel that our work did not find the right place. Our good missed fire. Not with God. There it has found in appreciation its full weight, in effectiveness its full value.

But this is less than the whole story. God has used it to better results than we could have expected, or even dreamed. "For brass I will bring gold, and for iron I will bring silver." No little investor in a great and vastly successful company could ever have the happy satisfaction that may come to every worker with Christ as he realizes what God can, and therefore unfailingly does, make out of the poor little venture of labor or talent or heart-throbs we intrusted to the trading ships of God. Like the scraps of tin and iron that miners learned how to use to catch the gold in the sluices, these he covers with his gold. One would think we would all be misers of opportunity, as we sought to save every scrap for investment, "buying up the opportunity because the days are evil," and waiting with eager expectation to see to what marvelous uses God would put that word, that act, that smile, that drudgery. Shall not one of the keenest joys of heaven be the delighted contemplation of God's unfolding marvels brought to pass through our work?

The fact, not indeed that it has been successful, or

appreciated, or thoroughly up to some standard, but that it has left in us its remainders of power, of firmness and girth of moral and spiritual muscle, is another reward that can in no way fail. "Into whatsoever house ye shall enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if a son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon him: but if not, it shall turn to you again." Received, it blesses you in blessing others; rejected, it blesses you in the very effort to bless. It returns, but richer than it went. There was the joy of service, there is the joy of being a better servant forever through the service. It may not seem to be registered in men's memories, it makes little show of being registered in other men's lives; but it is registered in yours, and in the very substance of your soul. Not one faintest, smallest, genuine effort ever failed of that.

And registered in an infinitely better repository. Here is a sweeter, dearer, more thrilling reward than any of these others. This is a fact, and a feeling, too, not a fact and a feeling in us, but a fact and a feeling in him. The good in that act of ours awakened a thrill in the heart of Jesus. His love did not fail to discern the imperfection,—for amendment, not for criticism,—but for remembrance it passed that by, and seized upon the grain of gold, or of stuff that he could turn to gold. To bring a thrill of pleasure to Jesus Christ: has earth or heaven a higher joy? How that hour must have lingered in Peter's memory when Jesus' eyes kindled and glowed as he said, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee." Wordsworth could say of Duty, and our hearts answer to the saying, "Nor

know we anything so fair as is the smile upon thy face"; but here is duty, love, grace, personalized in our Friend of friends, our Elder Brother. No instrument of precision that man can contrive or conceive can compare with the eager sensitiveness of that loving Heart to all good in us. Not the smallest trace shall pass unnoticed and unfelt. Our feeling of it we may miss, but his feeling cannot be missed; it is laid up for us in that securest of all treasuries—his heart.

X

THE TRAGEDY OF INDIVIDUALITY

ONE of the most tragic facts of human life is the chasm which seems to separate souls from each other and from God. We meet the great events of life alone,—its sorrows, its joys, its crises. "The heart knoweth its own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with its joy." In our extremity, we look across the chasm to those who are near and dear, but to our despair it seems that they cannot help. They can only look and long.

And we who would help others find ourselves baffled by the same barrier, the same impassable gulf. That young life, so sadly making shipwreck of itself through ignorance, or obstinacy, or rashness, or weakness,—how we long to communicate something of our knowledge, of our purpose, of our love, of our strength, but it will not let us. Its ignorance, its self-will, its blindness, form a wall that shuts us out. Or that brave soul, working out in conscious loneliness some great problem of human life, that soul in some Gethsemane or on some Calvary of trial or sorrow almost unbearable,—how our love and longing and hope and will seek to leap across to him! But he struggles on, unknowing, uncomprehending. He treads the winepress alone. What mother, wife, friend, has not felt this awful separation?

Yet this tragedy of isolation is not all the tragedy it seems. In so far as the chasm is really impassable, it is a necessary part of individuality; it is what constitutes the man a person. Deep within the soul must sit the individual will, its own arbiter, its own master. There must be ultimately—as far as man is concerned, and, some would say, even as far as God is concerned—the power of veto over all motions from without. If it were not so, man would be simply an automaton, a leaf borne on the bosom of the strongest breeze. Individuality could not be. This tragedy, then, is simply the tragedy of all existence.

But the chasm is exaggerated. It is neither as great nor as impassable as we think it. We are mistaken as to the facts.

Consider the gulf surrounding ourselves. It is chiefly imaginary, or of our own making. We are like the Frenchman, whose knowledge of English auxiliary verbs was no better than that of some Americans: "No one shall help me; I will drown."

It is true that the supreme decision must be made by my own will, that my own muscles must carry the burden; but my fellow-men are not so far away as I think. Love is seeking to cross that chasm, sympathy is on its way, imagination has already crossed. There is strength in that hand-pressure, there is inspiration in that look of love. Souls can touch at any distance. I am understood; I am appreciated. There are seven thousand who have not bowed the knee to Baal. Men are not the aliens they seem.

"No one is so accursed by fate,
No one so utterly desolate,
But some heart, though unknown,
Responds unto his own."

There is in the heart of the humanity that pulses so feverishly around us a throb that beats with ours. Human sympathy is revealing itself continually, at the briefest notice and in the most unlikely places. Let a little child lose its way, let any human life be endangered, let there be an instance of evident and poignant distress in the midst of our most crowded thoroughfare, and the hurrying throng, a moment before blindly intent upon its own concerns, gives instant evidence that the human heart is one. If I fail, therefore, to get real help from my fellow-men across my chasm, it is because I will not believe in its existence and power. It is there. I have only to reckon on it, and it comes. In the person of his followers, as well as of Christ himself, the beautiful words of Whittier are beautifully true:

"But warm, sweet, tender, even yet
A present friend is he,
And faith has still its Olivet,
And love its Galilee.

"The healing of his seamless dress
Is by our beds of pain.
We touch him in life's throng and press,
And we are whole again."

I am lonely only in my thought, unsuccored only in my unbelief.

More tragic and more real is the other chasm, that

which surrounds the soul we would help. It is more nearly impassable because, in the case of ourselves, we guard the drawbridge of our individuality, and it is in our power, hard though it be, to let that drawbridge down; we are on the inside. But in the other case we are on the outside. That independent will of the other man is in command.

Yet the matter is by no means hopeless. The chasm can be crossed; in countless instances it has been crossed. If it is not crossed, it is usually because we have somehow failed in love, or ingenuity, or persistency.

God's purposes sometimes ripen fast, unfolding every hour; and sometimes the bloom is as the century plant, long delayed, but glorious when it comes. It is inspiring to see the array of forces at our command. Imagination, touched by love, will transport us over into the heart of that fortress, and enable us to spy out its plan and mark its strong and its weak places. Love, enlightened by imagination and directed by judgment, will surround it with an atmosphere, with a throbbing warmth, that will penetrate the close-built walls and melt down the fences of icy reserve. Life, our own Spirit-filled life, will rearrange the particles of that separated soul till they leap to the barrier, in response. Better than anything else, from the heavens above or from depths beneath will fall, or spring up, the quickening power of God. The walls still stand? The gulf is still unbridged? Have we been thoughtful enough in our adaptation of means to ends? Has our love been warm enough, or expressive enough? Have we ourselves had enough of the

vitality of the children of God, pushing itself over into this other life? Have we been enlisting, by prayer and faith, the power of God? And above all, have we been persistent enough?

It may be the "first step that costs"; but for the lack of the last step, the whole journey is in vain. We turn away too soon. The life might have been brought back to that body rescued from the sea, if they had kept on five minutes more. "O love that will not let me go," is the human as well as the divine love, for they are one. Tact is needed, of course, and ingenuity, but with them the determination that will not give up till success comes, or all possible hope is gone. Edison on the trail of a new invention is a model for every Christian worker. Somewhere in the realm of nature is that substance which shall form the filament of that incandescent light. Where it is, he does not know, but he purposes to ransack the whole world, "until he find it." Somewhere, ideally, is that combination of mechanical or chemical elements which means a cheap storage battery; and he will make ten thousand experiments, until he gets it. Somewhere, says the heart of Christ's servant, in the range of powers human and divine, is the force, or combination of forces, which will reach this severed soul; and with the blessing of God, it must and shall be found.

Is there at the end one chasm that cannot be crossed, a citadel into which even God cannot or will not force his way, before which even he must say, "How often would I . . . and ye would not"? That is a mystery of individuality, sovereignty, and love, too deep

for us to enter now. The sorrow of Jesus over Jerusalem would seem to answer to a real fact in the history of some souls.

But we, whose own lives have been touched by the grace of God, can be very sure of this, that few are the hearts which loving ingenuity and unfaltering persistency will not sooner or later reach. Great is the power of prayer, and greater still the power of him who inspires and answers prayer. Not until the last of earth, assuredly, are we called upon to give up for any soul the hope that the tragedy of individuality may be changed by the power of love, divine and human, into its glory, and the man take his place, no longer in the awful isolation of sin, but as one of the family of the first-born, a son who at last has found his Father and his brethren, and, for the first time, himself.

XI

THE POWER OF INDIVIDUALITY

THAT which makes the tragedy of individuality is also the condition of its power. This separateness, this difference, which in our lonelier and weaker moments seems to us a prison, is in reality our citadel, securing our liberty and our independence. What appears a mountain peak of isolation is a point of vantage; it is the location of a battery; it is even the battery itself, whereby we may reach and accomplish what would be impossible otherwise.

Individuality furnishes, for instance, the means of arousal and attraction, through which we find entrance into the lives and hearts of our fellows. It is true that our likenesses constitute the strongest underlying force in drawing us together; but difference, like the jar which solidifies the still liquid just at the freezing point, is the fillip that is needed to set at work this mighty cohesive force. The herd raises its head to see the unfamiliar object, which, if it be not too strange, may then draw near. Men and women prick up their ears at sound of the unwonted voice, and delight to behold the new features. The face may be no better, the voice may be worse, but it is different, and hence attention, attraction, perhaps affection.

So individuality furnishes what may be called the chemical reaction of lives, their power to influence.

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There is no chemistry in a homogeneous substance. Two metals are necessary to set up the galvanic current. There must be resistance, or distance, if you are to have either the arc or the incandescent light. It is the endless variety of humanity that makes this a world of delight and power. This it is that moves the dynamos which thrill and enliven life, that sets up the innumerable currents through which God is working out the progress of the race. A world of sameness is a world of death. Let us have no regret that we are distant and different from our fellows; it is the Archimedean standing ground from which we may move the world.

But the greatest value of individuality lies in the fact that it may constitute the channel through which God reveals and expresses himself. Man first comes to real and lasting power when God acts on him and through him, and God's power and nature get themselves expressed most effectively through human life. Only one Human Life has ever perfectly expressed him. It was the life of that marvelously varied single character which impelled some to call him Elijah, and some Jeremiah; which caused some to say that he had a demon, and some that he was a gluttonous man and a winebibber,—for he gathered up all, and more than all, the broken gleams which had appeared in the servants of God before him, into one perfect whole, so complete that he could say without a blush and without fear of contradiction, " He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Now that he has taken his place at the center of things, that concentrated glory must reach the world through the lives of the men in

whom he lives, and in them we are to see, however partially, his character and power, and through them he is "to make the worlds."

To get the word of God revealed, and the will of God performed, to "make known through the church the manifold wisdom of God," requires men and women of every type and sort conceivable. His goodness, and power, and grace are reflected from us and through us as from innumerable facets, each at a different angle, and all together hinting rather than revealing the "more excellent glory." The imaginative, the prosaic, the stoical, the emotional, the strong, the weak, the man who never seems to have a struggle, the man who is as sensitive as a mimosa, or as yielding as a willow, each one of these is needed to reveal the character, or the mercy, or the goodness of God, as no other being in the universe can do it. "It was the good pleasure of God . . . to reveal his Son in me," exclaims the apostle; and each one of us may echo in his own person the other adoring words, "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as chief might Jesus Christ show forth all his longsuffering for an ensample." Some of us who have been inclined to bewail and deplore the individuality which we have discovered to be ours, in light of this fact may be able to thank him that it was his good pleasure to create us thus and not otherwise, that even as we are we might exhibit what he can do to and through such as we, content to be even the broken glass if only we reflect the glory of his love. And to do this is after all the one purpose of our existence, the chief element of our power.

Here, too, we find how this power may be realized. Too frequently we have thought that it was by the assertion of self-will and the emphasizing differences. It lies rather in the assertion of the will of God and a due combination of likeness and unlikeness; just enough nearness for influence, just enough distance for power. If the poles of the electric machine are touching there is no spark; but it is just as true, and more to the purpose, that neither is there any spark if the poles are too far apart. Many a man takes his individuality and runs off into a corner with it. Strange things happen to it there. Removed from the corrective influence of these other contacts, it branches out into all sorts of monstrosities. But, whatever else, one thing invariably happens; he robs himself of power.

All that any man needs, to be as individual as he pleases, is to push his development out in the same directions as the rest of men. No man need try to jump his species in order to be original; the result is always failure and caricature. The consummate genius of Shakespeare, for example, is nothing but the insight and imagination which exist in some measure in every man, thrust out, to be sure, to the farthest boundaries yet reached, but entirely human in its heights and in its depths. In that fact is no lessening of individuality, but instead the unveiling of its power. Eccentricity is a poor counterfeit of individuality. If anger is a brief insanity, eccentricity is a partial madness, a breaking of relationship with the normal and the sane. As certainly as man was made in the image of God, the composite picture of humanity discovered

in the men and women around us, and crowned and corrected by the face of Jesus Christ in the Scriptures, is the model for all growth and the index to all power.

Unlikeness in likeness is the secret of influence. To be yourself, your best and truest, to the very finger tips, and with it to have beating at your heart the red tides of the common human life, and the deeper tide of the life of God, in which all life is one, herein is the power of individuality.

XII

THE TRIUMPH OF INDIVIDUALITY

WHAT is the glory of individuality? "Assertion and aggression," answers one. "Self-development," replies another. Each starts out in life with the deliberate intention to make everything he meets yield him culture, enrichment, or strength. In itself that course fails to make the man a positive center of outgoing force. Its symbol is the sponge, and not the fountain. It works its own revenges, for the self he becomes is not the highest self he could have been. Individuality's true glory does indeed consist in making the most of one's self, but not the most for one's self.

It is the glory of individuality to find and make real the divine ideal for the God-given life I call "myself." A little girl was asked if she would not like to be her big sister. "Why!" she exclaimed in surprise, "God made me, me!" She was an individual, and she knew it. But too many of us easily accept the "me" that we are to-day as if that were what God meant. "This temper, this sluggishness, this jealousy,—oh, I was made so. It is just my way!" As if an heir to an estate should insist that because he finds there swampy lowland, barren hillside, thickets of thorn, he must, like the Chinaman with the patches, religiously preserve them. They are there, but not

in the final purpose. The design sees in that swamp the most fertile spot upon the farm; it sees the thicket of thorns replaced by a copse of firs, and the bare height crowned with a temple of the living God. Happy is the man who sees himself with unsparing eye, undeceived by his favorite weaknesses or pleasing sins, never mistaking blemishes for beauties, and, undeterred by the difficulties of the task, sets himself to work to gain strength, to cut out evils, to present himself to God, not the man he was, but the man God planned in him.

How to hold to what we have in common with others, and yet rightly develop what is our own, how to be universal and yet individual, is one of the great life problems and a great glory of individuality. Oddity is easy enough. But it is artificial and repulsive. And "the best things any mortal has are those which every mortal shares." The path to this victory, though not always easy, is plain. One has only to cherish the natural instincts which lead him into the society of his fellows, simply to let the human life and love that is in him work freely out, be much with men, and alert to hear what God through his countless human messengers would say to him alone. The ever active power of assimilation and unconscious imitation will furnish him the universal element, and his individual communion with God will give his voice a characteristic ring his fellow-men will prick up their ears to hear.

Greater, if possible, is the glory when individuality succeeds in fitting itself without friction into the general scheme of things, and that as an active power of

blessing and help. For this is the purpose of it. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give . . ." Every single moral and physical entity in this world is here for a positive purpose. In God's design there are no negations. What we call dead matter, the scientists tell us, is simply a knot of living force. There is no glory in being a mere recipient. Past and present may ascribe greatness to the world's takers of toll, but "with you," as with God, "it shall not be so, but he that is great among you, let him be your servant." The getting life, the hindering life, are condemned lives. Measure your individuality, not by the tribute you have taken, not by your blockade of others, not by your dwarfing and crippling and overriding; measure it by your forgetting of self in the desire to help and bless; by the way in which "all that is in you," without a thought of your own dignity or ease or greatness, has "for the truth's sake gone abroad"; by the souls you have thrilled into life and strengthened for victory; by the impulse you have given to the general movement forward into light. The mountain spring has lost itself; you trace it in the richer grass of the hillside. He who loses his life in such fashion gains it unto the life eternal. With every gush of sacrifice the heart grows richer; with every push of moral and spiritual muscle to help another our own grow sturdier; with every outgo of self-forgetting energy we become a more potent force. These are not the individualities that shrivel into caricature and die away into paralysis. They grow into the stature of the sons of God.

And the crowning triumph of individuality is in its

complete yielding to God, when in obedience and love it makes its one endeavor the doing of his will. If any man wishes a triumphant individuality, his path is plain. Let him follow Jesus Christ in his utter and active obedience to the Father. He is the most individual of the sons of men, individuality raised to its highest power. But it is not by oddity, or lack of balance. Here is one in whom is no strain of seeking after self, whose will is absolutely identified with the will of God, through whom God lives out his holiness and love and power to bless humanity. It was his glory to express the indwelling Father in terms of life; it is ours to express the indwelling Christ, surrendered to his will, living out his life. This is the end of our being;

> "Our wills are ours, we know not how;
> Our wills are ours, to make them Thine!"

This is the highest achievement of heart and will: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." To this goal our growth and God's grace are tending: "Beloved, now are we children of God, and when he shall be manifested, we shall be like him." And this is the mark of a son, "He doeth the will."

XIII

WHO SHALL GIVE YOU THAT WHICH IS YOUR OWN?

THERE is a joy none can take away; there is a wealth none can give. Our Lord sums up his parable of the unjust steward by saying, "He that is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much, and he that is unrighteous in a very little is unrighteous also in much. If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if ye have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?" These last words are not a mere parallelism, an ornamental flourish; they conduct us into the very heart of the matter. The whole saying forms a real and pregnant climax of increasing impossibility. "Little—much": the quality which crops out in the nugget or the grain runs through the whole lode. "Mammon—true riches": that which does not use aright this coarser and meaner thing, and is blind to its possibilities, will not administer adequately this finer thing, but more than that,—it cannot; it cannot handle it; it cannot even grasp it. "Another's—your own": if you have not been a worthy steward, you will not be a worthy owner; you cannot be an owner at all; no

man will give you your own; no man can give you your own.

What is a man's own? Whatever belongs to him inalienably, whatever is undetachable, whatever is a part of his own being. Three things only, therefore, —his spiritual accomplishment, his spiritual experience, and his character. These, of course, are also God's, but God's ownership in them does not make the man's any less. All other things are external, accidental, transitive, and, as Emerson says of language, vehicular. They are all detachable. The soul, when it goes hence, and often before that, leaves them all. These it never leaves. I did that thing for God, or rather, God did it through me. It is secure; it is mine. It is an asset in the bookkeeping of heaven which nothing can blot out. I had this experience of God's grace and power. It is mine. Nothing can destroy the fact. It has entered into my soul. I gained that moral muscle, that discernment, that larger vision. It is mine. It cannot be detached. It is part of me. There is nothing else that can rightly be called my own. Position, possessions, powers,— physical, intellectual, social,—they are all "another's." But how rich and large this is! Genius "cannot plagiarize; it simply takes its own wherever it finds it." "My own" is waiting for me wherever I shall find it. It confronts me at every turn. It awaits me all along my journey. It is speeding toward me on all the ships of circumstance. Who will give it to me? No one will give it to me. No one can give it to me. It is incommunicable. The hand of man, the hand of opportunity, the hand of God, may hold

it out to me, but no other hand than mine can grasp it for me. Till mine does, the thing in question is neither another's nor my own. The seal of ownership is appropriation.

What is hard for us to understand is that the one path of appropriation, of coming to one's own, is by way of "that which is another's," external, transient, alien, earthly. The true riches does not come from without, neither can it be evolved from within, pumped up out of the opulent depths of our own natures. Aside from the question of the divine co-working, it is the product of the reaction upon us of our own action upon the things that are without. Our inner qualities are developed, and so far as we know can be developed, only by our relationships with outer things. The things themselves are not the most important factor, but they are indispensable notwithstanding. It might seem to involve a Hibernicism if one were to say that the only significance of the outer is their share in developing the inner, and that the only real significance of the inner is in its effect on the outer, but it is true. If this be reasoning in a circle, it is not a vicious circle, but a gracious one, for by this mutual reaction the full sum of being is attained, man gains his growth, and God his glory. A scoffer once asked, "What are we here for?" "To help others," was the answer. "Then what are the others here for?" was his triumphant question. But the answer was easy. How the sum of blessing grows by that mutual helpfulness of helping, and helpfulness of being helped, which is twice blest, and blesses him that gives and him that takes!

To the individual, therefore, in this view, the chief significance of the things we touch is that they form the gymnastic apparatus of the soul. They are the counters and the pieces in the game, whose proper use gives the game its value, and is the game. That value can be realized in just one way,—unselfish fidelity. Unfaithfulness is a non-conducting film which stops the thrill of power, the pane of glass which shuts out the hungry from the feast, the great gulf fixed, here on earth, which not even Father Abraham can pass. If a man is not using the "mammon of unrighteousness" to produce spiritual effects for God, if he is not making his intellect, his charm, his magnetism, his social gifts, tell in leading men nearer to truth as it is in Jesus, in what conceivable way can he ever gain that permanent spiritual possession of accomplished spiritual good? He is unfaithful in that which is another's: he never gets "his own." If he is not employing life's duties and relationships, its sorrows and joys, its fellowships, its burdens, in such a way as to develop his discernment, his honor, his love, his devotion, his moral strength, how and when and where can he gain those qualities which are the enduring wealth of the soul? And how shall he make these things yield this peaceable fruit of righteousness except by meeting each need, each situation, each demand, with fidelity and adequacy, with all that in him is?

This is all he needs, with God's grace. The most splendid spiritual acquisition becomes, in this light, the simplest and readiest of processes. Absolutely dependent on some time and place and deed, it is abso-

lutely independent of any particular sort of these. The intrinsic qualities of the things themselves are indifferent. The crown is won alike in the kitchen or on the throne, in the poet's chamber or the preacher's pulpit. One can learn a lesson from the incandescent mantles so common to-day. A web of perishable cotton is kept submerged in a solution of rare minerals till every fiber is saturated. Then the dried fabric is subjected to the flames, the cotton vanishes, and in its place is left the pure white mineral, which shall endure the flame, and not only grow itself the brighter, but send a glow out into the night. "That which is another's,"—these passing, commonplace, almost or quite sordid things, how cheap they seem, how alien,—cotton, indeed! We fill them with patience and fidelity and love to God and man. The flame touches them. The cotton is gone, and we never see it again, but there is the white beauty of love, the enduring splendor of holiness, to gleam out with the glory of God forever. What matters the scaffolding now? It was "another's." "Our own" remains. It is a palace.

No man can keep the true soul from his own. He finds it everywhere. He finds it when he least thinks of it, and is most lost in thinking of another. But what a picture is the reverse! Pathetic is the sight of some man at whose command, and before whose very eyes, is every delicacy which gastronomic art can compass, but he cannot eat them or assimilate them, and starves in the presence of this abundance, which is "his own." More pathetic is that of an idiot king, whose title holds to all the pomp and power about him, but he does not control one atom of the power,

and to his darkened mind there penetrates not one gleam of this splendor that is "his own." But most pathetic is this picture, tragic, rather, with a tragedy in whose blackness there is no relief, for it is no baffling and hopeless physical disease, no heavy stroke of inability for which he is not responsible that starves and pauperizes him; it is his own moral failure. He is surrounded with every means of spiritual growth; before him are the open doors of God's treasuries of wealth; the richest food upon the king's table is placed full in his view, and he goes through life unblessed and unendowed. He never takes his seat upon his waiting throne. The one essential process of assimilation and possession he never even begins to employ. Of all his Father's feast he never had a taste. By his daily act he thrusts the crown away. Seeking himself supremely, he has disregarded others; disregarding others, he has lost himself. "If ye be unfaithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own?"

XIV

PREROGATIVE, PRIVILEGE, POWER?

Have We the Right to Do Wrong?

NEVER is the careless use of words so disastrous as when it sheds a false light upon our ideas of right and freedom. Then it is that we are set afloat among rocks and shoals with a fixed rudder and a doctored compass. The wrong notions of three common and imposing words furnish a striking illustration of this favorite deception of Satan. They are "prerogative," "privilege," "power."

With regard to certain indulgences, for example, an employer will say: "If a man wants to drink or smoke, he can do it; *that is his privilege.* But he cannot be an employee of mine if he does." The evangelist, pleading for the acceptance of his Master, declares, "You have the fearful power of choice, the awful right of free will. It is your *prerogative,* the prerogative of human nature, to choose Jesus Christ or to reject him. You can decide to accept the offer of salvation, and by the road of God's holiness find your way to heaven; or you can turn your back upon this, cast in your lot with the lost, and choose separation from God, with all that it means. That is your *privilege.*" To one who is struggling in the depths of sin, he exclaims, "Come up! live the life of right

and truth. Be a man. It is in the *power* of every soul to lead that life. Begin it."

Now all this is not only careless speech, it is arrant nonsense and cruel deception, and it almost or quite rises to blasphemy. It completely confuses the facts in the case. It casts a glamour of apparent right over actions that are not right, and by no possibility can be right. It credits to an inherent nobility of human nature choices and deeds that are never anything but ignoble and wrong. It makes men feel that they are somehow within allowable limits, when they are in fact beyond the dead-line of inexcusable sin. It glorifies Cain and deifies Satan. It fools men into leaning on the broken reed of their own ability, and leads them to defer or to decline altogether the proffered help of God.

It is no man's privilege to waste his money, sap his strength, and endanger or limit or destroy the lives and rights of others by indulging in expensive or evil habits. It is *not* an inherent right or a conferred prerogative of humanity to reject good and God incarnate in Jesus Christ, and choose evil and sin. Nor, though here we need a more guarded discrimination, is it in a man's "power" to begin the upward leading life.

If it be said that these words have come to have these popular meanings, so that one is almost more critical than the dictionary in rejecting them, it may be answered that that is poor virtue which is not more scrupulous than the statute book, and poor moral sense which is not keener than the speech of men. It is in exactly such scrupulous precision that clearness

of thought and keenness of virtue lie. Evil lurks in this fringe of verbal and moral underbrush.

What is a "right"? Even by the dictionary, it is "a just and proper claim to anything: a claim founded upon any consideration of justice, morality, courtesy, custom, civility, or upon either natural or positive law." "Prerogative" is "an indefeasible and unquestionable right, belonging to a person or body of persons by virtue of position or relation, and exercised without control or accountability." "Privilege?" It is "a peculiar benefit, favor, or advantage; a right or immunity not enjoyed by all, or that may be enjoyed only under special conditions." And "power" is "ability to act, regarded as latent or inherent; capacity for action or performance."

It is God's "right" and "prerogative," "indefeasible and unquestionable," to ask, and demand, our obedience; it is neither our right nor our prerogative to refuse it. The father's prerogative is love; but rebellion or indifference is no prerogative of the son. The man who does evil is not well within his "rights," he is deep within his "wrongs"—to God and his own soul. When one rejects Jesus Christ, he goes counter to every consideration of "justice, morality, courtesy, civility, positive and natural law." "Custom," alas! he may plead, but it is only in human law, and within narrow limits there, that custom constitutes right. The habit of sin, and the going with a multitude to do evil, has never made it good. Human nature has the power of choosing evil, but assuredly no "indefeasible right," or right at all. It is true that the choice is "without" outward "con-

trol," but it is not "without accountability." Before the bar of justice, love, and gratitude, the soul who turns back upon the One altogether lovely, and the chiefest among ten thousand, when he comes unto his own, must "show cause" and "answer for it" forever. "How often would I"—"But ye would not." "This is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the light."

There is indeed a gracious *privilege* in the matter, the God-given privilege of accepting Jesus Christ and becoming "accepted in the beloved," but not even this is in the primitive sense a privilege. Privilege is *privi-legium,* a private law, an opportunity not given to all people, or open only under special conditions. There is no privilege in that first sense with God. He is no respecter of persons. "Whosoever will" may "come." The opportunity of eternal life *is* a privilege in the second sense. Right did not confer it. Labor cannot earn it. Grace bestows it under special conditions,—trust and obedience. But for wrong-doing, whether in our attitude to Christ or to virtue and love, great or small, there is and can be no *privilegium,* no private law nor conditional permission. It is never anybody's right to destroy uselessly, or to commit slow suicide. Twenty-four hours in the day, three hundred and sixty-five days in the year, one hundred years in the century, with no allowance out for leap year or a single inserted second, right is right, and wrong is wrong, and sin is sin. God issues no dispensations from virtue. The sin may be very attractive, very politic, most necessary, modern in the

extreme, but it can never be anything else nor anything less than sin.

> "In vain we call old notions fudge,
> And bend our conscience to our dealing;
> The Ten Commandments will not budge,
> And stealing will continue stealing."

Call it rebellion, usurpation, crime, embezzlement, sinful waste,—it is not privilege.

And there is no "inherent or latent" "power" in that poor man whom we summon to right and liberty. Without trenching on the vexed old theological questions of "ability" and "inability," we all know ourselves well enough to be sure that only as the abounding grace of God works with us are we able to tread, or enter, that upward path, that "apart from me ye can do nothing," and that it is only "in him that strengtheneth" us that we can do "all things" or anything morally effective or spiritually vital. What man has is not "power"; it is possibility. The power, like the right, comes from without. Possibility where the source of power is external is capacity. Capacity is simply power to receive. To "as many as received him, to them gave he the power (American Revision, the "right"—but right conferred is power granted,) to become the children of God." This is no idle distinction. He who has inherent power may exercise it as he will and when he will; he who has capacity must accept the conditions of time and plan and manner of him who must add his power to the other's possibility to make it reality. Every soul should understand that it is duty and wisdom to "seek Je-

hovah while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near." "If so be" is a needed spur, and it expresses a profound and awful fact.

As human beings, therefore, what is ours is freedom of choice, and possibility of redemption. No word of ours ought to obscure the situation for ourselves or others. Put it plainly: You are free to choose right or wrong. You are allowed to decide whether you will take Christ or reject him. If you determine to indulge in such and such things, you can, and yourself and others will bear the consequences. But you have no privilege in the matter. You are Cain slaying your brother, and driving yourself into the desert. You have no prerogative here at all. You are denying God's prerogative in the very act of asserting what you call your own. You are Satan attempting to usurp the throne of God. But one "privilege" you have, not private, but extended to you and all men alike, the privilege of the grace of God. Accept that and you will have a prerogative,—a right conferred in virtue of a relation,—the prerogative of the sons of God, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. And then you will receive "power" indeed, the power of an endless life, the power of his resurrection, of him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or even think.

XV

BAD TEMPERAMENT AS AN ASSET

NOBODY will dispute the proposition that temperament is an asset, as applied to a cheerful, buoyant, or even temperament. The man who would choose a million dollars with lifelong gloom rather than poverty with lifelong sunshine would deserve the grand prize of folly, and would get it. Temper, as has often been said, is nine-tenths of life. Housewife, martyr, reformer, statesman, or merchant, owes happiness, success, and victory, more than to any other human factor, to this sustaining, transmuting, and magnetic force.

The difficulty appears when one tries to apply the proposition to a temperament of the sort called unfortunate, moody, despondent, irascible, variable. That would seem to be an asset on the wrong side of the balance-sheet. But it behooves us to be believers in God to the extent of assuming that when a man takes stock of his inherited equipment there is nothing in the inventory that is not an integral part of his working capital, intended by the great Designer of lives to furnish in one way or another some element of power or approach to efficiency. He of whom "every man's life is a plan" has made no mistake in assigning to each of his workmen his own place, machinery, and material. A temperament is like the weather,—any

temperament is better than none at all. We might like to take our choice, but since our choice has not been given us, our best part is to discover what can be made out of our assignment.

In a purely natural way one might find a certain value in these traits of mind and spirit, in the fact that our peculiar sort is needed to modify other ingredients in the seething caldron of human life, to be a check on opposite tendencies. Oxygen is indispensable to the fires of industry or of life, but an atmosphere all oxygen would be fatal. Nitrogen may be inert, positively negative, so to say, but it is as useful in its way. Optimism needs the check of the pessimistic tendency. "A grain of glory mixed with humbleness will cure a fever or lethargicness." But who wants to play infusorial earth or sawdust to the world's nitroglycerine in order to produce dynamite? And besides, these qualities are inherently wrong, some of them by negation, and others by positive bent. In this natural reckoning they are not assets; they are deficits, they are evil. It is only in view of the spiritual life and the grace of God that they assume their value. The significance of any particle of matter or any point in space is found not in its substance or its latitude and longitude, but in the forces that pulse through it, or may be made to do so.

A temperament of the unfortunate variety is a most valuable asset, because it furnishes a beautiful place for a battle and a victory. The man who has no temperament to fight has undoubtedly an easier time of it, and no one is called upon to go out of his way to avoid that,—or to seek it; but he misses some-

thing in the way of strength and power and victory which is presented to the other. Life is for growth, and growth in its sturdier aspects rarely comes without struggle. "Lead us not into temptation"; but through the conflict when it comes, and the conquest, give us strength! Great battles are not for the present delightsome, but they decide in favor of righteousness, and give the deathblow to oppression. The nations that know them not make no progress. The tropic dweller gains no moral fiber.

Yet one would feel like declining the struggle did he not discern, again, the value of temperament in that it presents an almost matchless opportunity to use God's grace, and so to get to know God as he cannot in any other way be known. It is doubtless possible to see God out in the open, under the broad heaven, and happy is the man who really sees him there. But too often the sunlight blinds the eyes. We are more apt to see him when something shuts out the wide prospects of success and unimpeded impulse, and shuts us in to the seclusion and the shadow.

> "Eyes that the preacher could not school,
> By wayside graves are raised,
> And lips say, 'God be merciful,'
> That ne'er said, 'God be praised.'"

It may be questioned whether there are not certain qualities of God that it is impossible to see, or at least to realize, except in the narrow valley of struggle and sorrow.

> "It lieth afar between mountains; and God and the angels are there;
> And one is the dark mount of sorrow; and one the bright mountain of prayer."

When the soul has recognized that awful handicap, as nature calls it, of a despondent or envious disposition, and has been forced in its utter helplessness to lay hold on God, and finds, as it surely will find, how God responds and gives victory, there is a revelation of God sweeter and better than elsewhere; yes, impossible elsewhere. Beautiful is the valley where I meet my God. "Wherefore I take pleasure in weaknesses, in injuries, in necessities."

With this thought we are able, perhaps, to rise to another, a frequent thought in the mind of Paul; this handicap of ours, now that we have it, is a glorious opportunity for God to show forth his power. "Who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born blind?" "Neither did this man sin, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." "Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me as chief might Jesus Christ show forth all his longsuffering, for an ensample of them that should thereafter believe on him unto eternal life." "Who sinned, this man, or his parents, that he should be born with this envy, this irascibility, this gloom?" "That is not pertinent to the situation: neither he nor his parents, but that the works of God might be manifest in him." For as the man born blind, but reborn into sight, went forth to spread the glory of Jesus Christ, so a violent temper tamed and in harness, despondency toned up to sweet and comfortable faith, irritability conquered, and impatience subdued, are trophies that not only enhance the glory of Jesus, but bring other bondmen of sin into his liberating captivity, and that weakness of mine becomes the

conductor along which his power flows to transform others as it is transforming me.

In that contact with other lives, perhaps the greatest value of this weakness turned into a power is the fact that it gives him and me an approach to those who need us. "For it became him . . . in bringing many sons unto glory to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings," since no man can lead another through ways he has not traversed himself, or be able to touch him save through that mysterious contact of a common experience. It is dreadful to me sometimes to think that I have had to struggle with this unlovely trait, this haunting evil, this painful weakness; but in that experience is my approach to a hundred others like me, and in that, overcome by the grace of God, is my power to help. When God put me together, he left that spot for his approach to sin-smitten humanity. None must seek by his own act to furnish that avenue for God, but, finding it to exist, shall he not recognize his opportunity and thank God that through him may flow the divine power? With what tenderness henceforth he touches the unhealed sores of men, sores like his own before God began to work on him! From this priesthood of sympathy are shut out the strong, the sound, the unblemished, the untempted; into it come they alone who were lame and halt and blind, and One who was tempted in all points like as we, but without sin.

So it must be remembered that the whole value of this asset lies in its use, in the power that pulses through it, in the obedience of faith, the struggle of determination, the supply of help, the victory of

grace. Without this, it is the weight that tends to sink us "deeper than ever plummet sounded." Thrilled by the electricity of God, it becomes the magnet which holds us to the greater magnet, and draws others through us to him.

XVI

THE LIMITATIONS OF SELF-RESPECT

SELF-RESPECT is counted one of the most valuable assets of the soul, but it has its distinct and decided limitations. It is, of course, a very comfortable feeling, although it might be questioned whether in most cases more comfort or less comfort is to be desired. It is a helpful antidote for the scorn or disapproval of our fellows when we have followed the guidance of conscience rather than the wishes of men. If we have, unjustly, forfeited the good opinion of our neighbors, then self-respect more than takes its place, and without it, their good opinion would be but ashes in our mouths. It is a valuable negative ingredient in our spiritual strength and comfort. The small boy defined salt as "what makes things taste bad when it is left out." The discomfort caused by the absence of self-respect to one who still retains the memory of its flavor is greater than the comfort of its presence,—"a little less, and how much away!"

And self-respect has proved in countless instances a mighty specific against temptation, a shield against sin. Conscious of clean instincts and a clean record, the man more easily says "no" to the blandishments or the threats of evil. "Shall such a man as I do this?" The "white flower of a blameless life" perpetually incites to resistance against anything that can

blot or blemish. Where this brings to bear the forces of conscience, the memories of a noble ancestry, "trained for ten long centuries to hate and loathe a lie," all the power of consistent devotion to high ideals, its aspect is most admirable, summed up in that beautiful motto "*noblesse oblige*" ["rank imposes obligation"].

And yet, very valuable as an auxiliary, when self-respect sets out to do battle alone it is a superficial and futile thing, a broken reed on which, if a man lean, it will pierce his hand, a defense of straw.

Like a balloon or a steel ship, it is good only while it is unpunctured. The man is one of Shakespeare's "little wanton boys that swim on bladders." Let his self-respect, if this be all he has built upon, once be broken over, and a breach in his defenses has been made which may be fatal. The more implicitly he has depended on it, and the greater his pride in it, the more disastrous the injury. A schoolboy had earned the honorable title of "the boy that never looks back." Innumerable temptations had assailed him, and nothing could induce him to turn his head. But one day a circumstance arose, extraordinary, unique. Even his seasoned virtue gave way. He looked back. And his fate was sealed. The bubble was pricked. The man, doubtless, will not yield as easily as that, but his chief defense has proved defective. It will never after have the strength that he thought it had. He is a city broken down and without walls.

For self-respect is sure to be punctured. It is too

weak for the forces that assail. Somewhere in the world is the enemy that is stronger. This is the truth in that bitter cynicism, "every man has his price." It simply means that there exists potentially some combination of forces outward and inward which may be too much for the inward moral strength of any man whatsoever. There is no use in ignoring that fact. Every day of human history, neither more nor less these latest days, proves it. Motives for virtue which derive their strength entirely from within are unable to make head against the awful aggregation of motives, outward and inward, that attack. If self-respect rushes her soldiers to the breach, some other self-grounded motive—fear, indolence, cupidity, passion, desire—takes a hand. Self is always the arbiter, and self, self-bribed, is prone to lean insensibly to the side of ease or profit or pleasure. It will be strange if some one of the powers of evil does not find the vulnerable spot. Then pride becomes a cobweb, a distant, vague, intangible thing; and desire is present, real, tangible, ponderable,—and victor.

Even in the cases, and they are not as many as we think, where the overt sin does not prevail, where there is no outward surrender and defeat, self-respect is ineffective against the mighty host of spiritual sins. Indeed, under this very bulwark is the favorite ground where the most dangerous plant their siege engines, make their entrance, and win their battle before the garrison has a suspicion of their presence. Self-respect does not put up a very good fight against envy, or avarice, or jealousy, or malice, but it usually throws the door wide open to pride, to an anger that

masks itself as righteous indignation, to contempt, forgetfulness of God, ingratitude, or uncharity. And fearful as the nature and the results of overt and flagrant sins are, the moral ruin and the spiritual alienation they work are no greater than those wrought by these spiritual hosts of wickedness in high places. "The publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you." One can conceive no shrewder strategy of the enemy, with souls of a certain type, than thus to amuse the garrison with the fiction that they are defeating him on the side of open sin through the force of self-respect, while under the cover of that noisy battle he finds entrance on the subtler and more fatal side of the spiritual sin.

The truth is, self-respect is a fiction. The thing that underlies it is an imaginary thing. One would not ignore the fact that many men rightly rejoice in conscious integrity of general purpose; and in a certain cleanness of taste, instinct, and habit, and in a certain amount of success in the struggle against inclination, indolence, and passion. But what is that, as a foundation for self-respect? The men who best know virtue, and self, and God, the high saints, never say anything about self-respect. They see too clearly the high and deep and exceeding broad requirements of the law, and the grace of God, and the awful distance between that exalted standard and their own achievement; and they are still. For "merit lives from man to man, and not from man, O Lord, to thee." "But now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Is it said that the testimony of these high saints is that of the

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"saintly temperament," and not of the "healthy mind"? There are no healthy minds. Two kinds of minds there are, and these only: the mind that sees its disease, and has come—or has not, alas—to the great Physician for healing; and the mind that knows not its disease, but is saying, "Peace, when there is no peace," and has plastered over its sores with the fiction of self-respect. Is this cynicism, cant? It is Scripture, fortified by every newspaper, and corroborated by every code of laws from Moses and Hammurabi until this hour.

What then have we left? Nothing. And everything. We have taken away the shield of straw, the sword of lath. What in their stead? *Self-respect;* but this time not for the self that has been, nor for the self that is, but for the self that shall be, for the man that is to be, the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Respect, however, not chiefly even for that,—whatever is built on the basis of *any* self is weak,—but respect for God. Joseph's cry, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" is the formula of power. An external authority, obligation to another, the standard of another, the inquisition of another, not the judgment day of our own conscience alone, but the flame of the divine gaze: these are the things that stiffen virtue and hold in the face of temptation. Above all respect *unto* God, over and above all that our own conscience can do, our own will, our own strength of purpose—that look of the sinking Peter, that look of the struggling Paul, that look of the smitten Israelite, away from the weak and wavering self to the unchangeable grace of the living God.

Our strength cometh, not from the hills which surround us, still less from the hills on which we sit; our strength "cometh from Jehovah, who made heaven and earth." "God, be thou merciful to me the sinner."

XVII

THE SAVING GRACE OF INCONSISTENCY

INCONSISTENCY is provoking, irritating, aggravating. It shocks our sense of symmetry and fitness. It disturbs our calculations, disappoints our hopes, and makes life seem a lottery. When we build we would like assurance of stability, but this is ever balking us. It is always disquieting to feel that some human chemical element is going to act one way one day and another the next; that human nature will not "stay put." How much of it there is, and how great is its variety!

There is the inconsistency of the plain "frivol," light of mind and heart, the play of every wind that blows, the foam of the sea. Of the opportunist, who has, no doubt, his own steady (and selfish) purpose, but whom we find blowing now hot, now cold, now East, now West, according to the prevailing breezes. Of the Pharisee, perhaps unconscious of the fact, who strains out a gnat and swallows a camel, sensitive to slight sins and dull to great ones. There is the inconsistency of the hypocrite, who covers the deep damnation of his inner soul by some fair show of scrupulousness. Of the sordid calculating sinners, no hypocrites, but also no saints, who drive a bargain with their own conscience, if not with heaven, and

> "Compound for sins they are inclined to
> By damning those they have no mind to";

Of the one-sided thinker who denies to-day the logical consequences of his opinions of yesterday (and of to-day as well). Of the "average man," overborne by the present look or trend, wishing to do well, and to have his present accord with his past, but unable to pierce to the real inner meaning of things and thoughts, and so forever veering, and rarely knowing it. "Oh, consistency, thou art a jewel!"

But inconsistency is a jewel, too. It is freedom, the breath of life, salvation. It must be inconsistency of the right sort, of course. Moral inconsistency has no proper place in God's universe, high or low. But times without number the true inconsistency has proved a saving grace. It retards declension. It prevents error, it preserves sanity, it promotes advance. It also softens the hard outlines of routine and formal living. It cracks the shell of dull and slavish conformity to outward law or opinion. It points out the way to the large spaces of the Spirit.

The man who, in a right way, can be boldly "inconsistent" can live on both sides of a truth. He may have to do it, as American polygamy is now mostly conducted, "tandem," and not "abreast," but he must do it. Any truth of God is too large for the greatest human mind to grasp its opposites and its inner connections all at once. We must stand first on one side and then on the other. It is the one-sided stand that makes on the one hand the "heretic," disagreeable, troublesome, and sometimes "pestilent," and on the other the narrow and even persecuting bigot. "System" is a noble thing, and the normal mind is evermore impelled to seek after it; it

is in our bone and blood and sinew. But we must also perceive our limitations, and discover that the crystal globe of truth is too massive for the single-handed clutch. Very probably, with increased knowledge and power the relations and reconciliations of things will more and more appear; but something must be left, no doubt forever, for the researches of eternity, and meanwhile we can shamelessly and boldly hold the things we see, although their juncture is beyond our sight.

This "saving grace" enables a man to achieve another very valuable accomplishment, that of living on all sides of his own nature. "How is it," said the young woman to her friend, "that you are so different at different times? Sometimes you are so robust, strong, manly, and then again so effeminate, impulsive, dependent." "Oh," he said, "that is very easy. Half my ancestors were men, and half were women." A man is but a woman developed upon the manward side more than on the other; and vice versa. There will always be "inconsistency" as the strong, massive, aggressive elements now prevail, and now the tenderer, softer, more intuitive. That soul which holds itself down to the one or the other truncates its own being, atrophies its own life, refuses its largest growth. You may well be afraid of yourself if you never find your thought or emotion seemingly at war with one you had last week, or an hour ago.

This living on all sides of one's nature is what has saved both individuals and the world at large from the tyranny and consequences of their own narrow

and partial creeds, whether political, social, or religious. Perhaps all creeds are partial and narrow,—certainly all but ours; and since we have never taken in the whole range of knowledge and feeling, it is possible that even our inductions are too limited and our deductions now and then misled. When we are brought straight up against living facts, palpitating situations, and breathing men and women, theories crack or stretch. Some of them ought not, it may be. But some of them ought. For while no public question, any more than a theological problem, is to be determined on sentimental or emotional grounds alone, the heart is a statesman and theologian who has as valid claims to be heard as ever had the head. Had it not been for this blessed grace of inconsistency there had been times when the life and love of human kind would have been crushed beneath a Juggernaut of scholastic reasoning, which after all left perhaps the largest body of facts out of consideration. There has not been enough of it to save the world from being too often a torture-room, but without it men would have pursued to the bitter end the logic of one-sided conviction. God is to be thanked that under the snows of clear, cold, critical thinking lie the lava lakes of human sympathy and love which will now and then break forth, illogical as the eruption may seem.

Inconsistency leaves the man free, again, to meet situations as they are, unhindered, undeterred. Probably nothing has so hampered humanity as has the "dead hand" of the past, the general past, or our own particular, personal past, precedent slowly hardening into law. This sort of consistency is, indeed,

"the hobgoblin of little minds." It would confine throbbing life within the sepulchers of the dead. What I did, even what I thought, yesterday, is done, it is thought. It met a certain situation. It was based on certain knowledge, a certain outlook. To-day I face a new situation, with wider knowledge, with a better grasp, it should be, of the same deep principles I had yesterday. What care I for inconsistency? My consistency is not with the outgrown shells of things, but with the abiding and eternal truth of God in the living, expanding present. Yesterday "I gave place in the way of subjection, no, not for an hour, and even Titus, being a Greek, was not compelled to be circumcised," but to-day Timothy my beloved son shall undergo that rite, and to-morrow I shall be in the temple to pay the charges of those who have made a vow. It was a severe criticism of Gladstone that at different times of his life he occupied such opposite positions upon great questions; but it was his glory.

And it was his safety and advance, for this saving grace is the open door to truth. It puts our hand into the hand of our Guide, who through the events of life, the thoughts of men, and his own intimations, leads us into all the truth. Was it not Agassiz who greeted a friend with beaming face: "You know I have been teaching for twenty years such and such a thing about certain fossils? Well, I have just read So-and-So's book, and he has proved to me that it is not so at all!" It is to be feared that that consistency we pride ourselves upon is too often intellectual inertia, stubbornness, and vanity. We will not advance to

truth because it looks like retreat from our position.

Of course all this is not inconsistency at all. It is deepest consistency. It is truth, truth to one's self, to one's profoundest convictions. It is faith, faith in God, belief that his truth is larger than anything we have yet beheld, and that he who seeks it, and will learn, shall be guided by One who, whatever the means he uses, has one goal. It is openness of mind, that childlikeness through which we enter into the Kingdom. It is freedom, from partialness, from pride, from fear, from slavery of mind and heart. It is not caprice. It does not cut loose unduly from the past. It gives that past its proper weight. It does not despise the scientific and the logical. They have their just claims. To disregard them would be to invite vagary and delusion. But it opens its ears to other witnesses as well. It is not vacillation. The pilot whose eye is on the star, whose heart is at the goal, whose mind is on the chart, may tack this way and that, may thread now this devious channel of smooth water and now that, until his path looks intricate and aimless to those who cannot read his law or see his star, but he avoids rocks, shoals, and currents without number. He is the one supremely steady man that sails the seas.

XVIII

THE FORMULA OF IMMUNITY

THE danger of contagion is unavoidable. If we stood still, the winds would bring it to us. We cannot live our own individual lives in this world, and keep it out. Indeed, as servants of Christ, our work among the crowding sons of men is expressly concerned with contagion. Christ's followers are the world's relief corps, its physicians, its nurses, its sanitary engineers, and they must plunge into the heart of its fever swamps, its abodes of disease. Well might we wish for some armor of proof, some enveloping atmosphere, clad in which we could go about our work unharmed; some antitoxin by which, once administered, we might be forever immune! Is there such an armor, such an antitoxin?

Many would rely upon the higher natural instincts, a certain innate cleanliness and nobility of soul which instinctively, unconsciously, repels the evil. Unfortunately we are so sadly mingled with the dust, the dust polluted by our own and our fathers' sins, that we cannot be sure that the baser may not in some unguarded moment assert itself above the higher; and such is the effect of continuous association that we have no guarantee that the best in us may not slowly be assimilated to that which surrounds it, as the hottest fire, unreplenished, sinks at last to the temperature of the enwrapping air.

Others feel that they can move unharmed amid these perils, girded and guarded by a resolute will, an inflexible determination to adhere to a prescribed and ordered righteousness. Without this, to be sure, the man is a city broken down and without walls. But the enemies are subtle, and the garrison is divided, and sometimes somnolescent, and memory is feeble, and will is weak, and purpose flags.

Some desperately propose inoculation as the secret of immunity. Have the disease once, or some cognate form, like cowpox for smallpox, and get well over it. Once feel the awfulness of sin, or its emptiness, by bitter experience, be rescued from it, and it henceforth means nothing to you,—you are sterile to it. The best workers amid the slums are the slum's converted denizens; they are in least danger of contagion. But that is neither good theory nor good fact. Any disease "takes it out of a man," but it takes away more than the elements which nourish it; it takes away some of those that nourish him. It leaves the soul weaker, and it leaves lingering germs in unsuspected places. It does not make immune; it makes susceptible. There is no help here.

Still others, rushing to the opposite extreme, would hedge the life away from contact, or hedge it about with a network of rules and restrictions, reinforcing the fallible will with buttresses of promise and honor and pledge and rule. Yet was there ever a system of rules air tight, or a gate thrice barred which could not be unlocked by the man in charge?

Much more promising are those methods which may be called spiritual. There is the rule of prayer,

which continuously surrounds the soul with the atmosphere of the divine protection, and calls down the heavenly legions at the moment of need. There is the rule of faith, wherein the soul confidently trusts that it will be protected. He who fears not, often moves amid the pestilence as if the banner of guardianship were over him. Yet the wings of prayer sometimes falter, and faith may be presumption, leading us where angels fear to tread, or omitting the precautions with which flesh and blood cannot dispense.

Getting absorbed in some right interest is, almost more than these, a mighty secret of vigorous health,— "the expulsive power of a new affection." The Salvation Army "lassie" moves amid the contagion of the slums, in and out of its most dangerous places, which fairly reek with corruption, and she touches its most awful sores in a way which for one engaged there in another manner and for other motives would mean inevitable infection; but she bears a charmed life. A thousand fall at her side and ten thousand at her right hand, but it does not come nigh her. A mind so full of one thought is safe from others; and when that thought is wholly outgo, when the currents of life are all strongly outward, it must be a vigorous germ of evil, indeed, that can stem them and find its way up into the fountain. When, in addition, they are thoughts of purity and love, evil can find no cohesion with them. Like that white flower at the coal-pit's mouth, their own secretions wash away the dust that settles and will not let it stay. But immunity like this in its perfection may be for angels; it is not for men here on earth. Perfect love casteth out fear and

resisteth contagion, but love is not yet made perfect, and at the point where she fails, fear finds an entrance and disease lodges a germ.

What, then, is the availing secret? It is one which fortifies our natural instincts, or sanctifies them, reinforces and utilizes the will, uses rules, works through purpose, prayer, faith, and love, deepens the outward flow of life's currents, and gives them all their strength. That secret is the presence within the soul of an outgoing life, intrinsically stronger than the evil life which touches it, immune by reason of its own sin-destroying power, its burning holiness. It is the indwelling life of God. It is "Christ in you." There are springs in the ocean that not all its salt water can pollute, because they send up their waters with a force that the ocean cannot overcome, and they have that force because high in the mountains is a great sheet of water, fed from the inexhaustible reservoirs of the air, which is ever pressing down and in and up and out. They head in heaven, and the earth or the sea cannot prevail against them. This is Zechariah's vision of the lamps and the olive-trees. It is Bunyan's vision of the fire that was not quenched, though the adversary continually threw water on it; for there was one behind the wall forever replenishing it with oil.

This indwelling life of God is the secret of immunity. There is no other. For all other life there is somewhere some contagion which is too powerful to be repelled or resisted, but "the prince of the world cometh: and he hath nothing in me." "Apart from me ye can do nothing." This life every child of

God possesses and may confidently rely upon. It is his only reliance. It is his complete reliance. But it is effective for immunity only when it is trusted with the obedience and the receptiveness, as well as the confidence, of faith. What we are prone to forget is the part our own action must play. We cannot originate it, for it is the originating power. We cannot even of ourselves maintain it, for "it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure." But what our action does is to furnish it the opportunity of effective operation at the outposts of contagion. The only avenue through which this ocean of force can flow is the emotion or will or act of the man. Will, effort, purpose, love, prayer, faith, are its channels. If these be choked, little or much, by just so much the supply received is scanty, the pressure feeble, and contagion forces its way in. When these are wide open, the gates of hell cannot prevail. We are more than conquerors. Christ becomes in us not only the hope but the realization of glory.

This is supremely the teaching of his own human life among us. How serene he moved amid the thronging diseases and contagions of the world! He touched the leper and was undefiled; the harlot wiped his feet with her hair and he was unpolluted. The meanness, the jealousy, the corruptions, the weakness, of all he met, brushed against him, pressed in upon him, bore down with awful weight, and caused no ulcer, nor even left a mark. It was the indwelling life of God! But maintained with what scrupulous obedience, with what resolute resistance of evil, with what unceasing love, with what unslumbering dili-

gence, with what strenuous prayer! This is the formula of immunity: "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be perfected into one." "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." "Keep yourselves in the love of God."

XIX

THE CHRISTIAN DUTY OF "FRONT"

"FRONT" is a colloquial word for a thing that may be very condemnable, or very commendable, but is sure to be very important. The face we present to the world, the carriage of our bodies, our attitude toward the problems and demands of life, not only as operative in inward feeling, but as seen in expression, movement, posture, are almost more than half the battle. The particular combination of circumstances which fronts us does not chiefly decide our destiny, but rather the port and manner with which we front it. There are circumstances which no confidence or bravery can overcome, but there are no circumstances out of which, with the blessing of God, these cannot wrest the prize of real and lasting good. And these are within our power. We can face our fellows, or our fate, calmly, confidently, serenely, with persistent purpose, or in mind and body we can slink and falter and advertise to all that we are sinking. Most of us have felt, perhaps, that all we could do was to meet life's demands, somehow, as faithfully and as bravely as we could, without exhausting our nerve force in the additional production of "face" or "front." But "face" and "front" are not added burdens; they are steel armor (brass, some would say), and they are motive power. More

than that, "face" is a duty to our fellows and to our God as well as to ourselves.

A man's bearing is the principal ingredient he furnishes to the flavor of other people's lives. Courage, cheer, confidence are contagious, and so are doubt, dread, despair. What right have we to bring a depressed and gloomy countenance into the presence of men and women who themselves are having a hard struggle for victory or even for existence? That smile of hope, that quiet determination, braces them like a tonic. Our discouragement is the last ounce that sends the struggling swimmer to the bottom. "Then went in that other disciple." And if, because of our frank despondency, it is written, "Then went *down* that other disciple," some of his blood is on our head. A frown may be murder, a droop of the mouth may be accessory before the fact. It is our duty to put our doubts and dreads and failures far in the background, among the rubbish, and our hope, cheer, virtues in the show window. It is sinful selfishness not to put on our faces the look of the feeling that we ought to have.

In the furtherance of our own success, "front" is powerful in its effect upon the world. The largest share of life's outward progress, and no small part of its inner advance, is dependent upon the suffrages or sufferances of our fellows. We get what they vote us or concede us. Both these depend upon what our bearing asks or demands from them. The world reacts upon men in direct correspondence to the way they act upon the world. This man's whole look and posture is an apology for existence; and the men he meets at

once acknowledge the necessity, and question the sufficiency, of the apology. This other is asking for the privilege of being unnoticed and is promptly accorded it. His neighbor conducts himself as if life were a perpetual jest, and is accepted as the biggest joke in it. The air of this other is that of the vanquished. "All is over but the funeral." That wounded bison, surrounded by the snapping wolves, does not more eloquently proclaim by droop of shoulder, tremor of limb, and roll of eye that the moment has come for the sudden rush which ends the battle, than this man shows that his cause is desperate, and that a push will end him. That invitation to a push the world of selfishness rarely fails to accept. The synonym for a marked success is "to make a killing." It is a brute impulse and ought to find no place in the Christian world, but it is natural even for the Christian to give his push-in-aid where it promises good rather than to waste it in a cause that seems hopelessly lost.

Of course, we must remember that, while that man who pushes on with confident and self-absorbed self-assertion overbears the lesser assertiveness of the ninety and nine, he also rouses in them a latent antagonism that smolders till circumstances gather it into a flame of resentment. At last his self-assertion challenges the strength of some brute as great as or greater than himself, and he goes down before superior bulk or brawn or cunning. But given the man of serious, hopeful aspect, confident, expectant, persistent but fair, determined, but with evident good will, quiet but resolute, not anxious to conceal the best in him any more than he is overeager to express it,

plainly not resolved to have more than he is entitled to, or even to push strenuously for all to which he is entitled, clearly more concerned about his duties than his rights, but as clearly not to be trifled with; let him add to this an air of erectness, alertness, aliveness; and, other things being at all equal, he is going to get the best the world has to give. It will not open its treasure houses at once even to him, but it will open. Like a savage dog, it may greet him with a tentative growl, which it will repeat later, because, not having changed its disposition, it wants to see if he has changed his; but it will accord to his firm tread the right of way.

The greatest effect of "front" is on the man himself. It is astonishing how outward expression and posture affect inward feeling. This has been tried consciously ten thousand times, and unconsciously ten billion. The mere act of straightening the spine, throwing the shoulders up and back, raising the chin, and expanding the chest, not only allows the internal organs better play for digestion, respiration, circulation, but gives the whole man a feeling of strength, readiness, and competence, which no lopsided, stoop-shouldered laxling ever had. Assume the scowl of the malevolent, the sneer, the droop of the despondent, and we throw ourselves far in toward the actual experience of these emotions. The smile of the assured or the benevolent, the clear-eyed alertness of the ready, the firmness of the determined, are equally at hand. Some who dread the dead-line of the ministry and of many another occupation to-day could postpone the evil day, not by the pathetic expedients of the dye-

bottle and the tailor, but by a military "setting up process" of soul and body which clothes itself in the quicker motions, the swifter speech, the more mobile countenance, the readier smile, the alerter eye, of the youth we had no right to let slip. The cynic has it that a man is as old as he feels, a woman as old as she looks, and a minister as old as his young people think he is; but each of us, man, woman, minister, what not, is as old, strong, alert, victorious, as he "makes out," or "makes up" to be. The physician says a man is "as old as his arteries." Spirit knows no such limitation. He is as young as his faith in God, his will-power, and his "front."

Is there not a good deal of hypocrisy, pretense, assumption about all this? Something of that popular expedient known as "bluff"? It must take a good deal of "face" to put on this "front"? If it is all front, yes. If there is no inner reality back of all this assertion, the fact will appear with appalling speed, and the poor wash of gold will soon wear away. Assumption must never reach the extreme of denying, with some modern faddists, the real facts of life, and especially to those who have the right to know them. One must not imitate the banker, who, knowing himself to be already hopelessly insolvent, invites deposits which simply pay his fare to Canada, or which are poured down the rat hole of the gambler's desperate "sparring for time."

But is this Christian confidence in front of life's situations anything like "bluff"? That upright carriage, that smile of assurance, that firm resolve, is true to the best in you. You have the power to be one of

a thousand possible men or women. *This* is the one you ought to be, the only right choice among your possible personalities. You are not that poor slinking, drooping, spineless thing. You do not have to be. God never meant you to be. You have no right to be. The only man you have a right to be, in justice to yourself, exclaims

"What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?
Like the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel?
Being, who?
One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward!"

That quiet determined hopefulness till the battle is all fought out is only giving Providence a fair chance. The gambler "spars for time," hopeful of a lucky stroke, but the Christian fights on as one who

"Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would win."

His very courage, persistency and cheer, is his co-operation with God. He must not fail the great Co-worker. That is the evil of suicide and surrender; it puts one beyond the hope of rescue. And rescue, even triumph, can come so soon. One movement of God's hand, and the whole aspect of the battle has changed. How foolish to confess defeat when God is on the throne!

But whether the aspect of the battle has changed or not, God and his relations to right, truth, and those that trust him never have. In the light of that fact, this bold front is fully justified. You have a perfect right to the serenity and the smile. God is your

Father, you are accepted in the Beloved, all things work together for good,—your boldness is not assumption of what is not yours, it is appropriation of your heritage in God, your right.

And imperatively your duty. What business has a child of his to slander the Father by the drooping shoulder, the despondent eye, the surrendered skirmish? Is not the Government on his shoulder, is he not guiding us with his eye, is not the whole battle in his hand? Shrinking is misrepresentation, backwardness is disobedience, fear is unfaith. No front can be too bold for a son of God.

"No, at noonday in the bustle of man's worktime
Greet the unseen with a cheer!
Bid him forward, breast and back as either should be,
'Strive and thrive,' cry 'Speed,—fight on, fare ever
There as here!'"

XX

MARTYRS WHO MISS THEIR CROWN

THERE are those who think they are martyrs, and some who in a real and appreciable degree are martyrs, who are missing, in whole or in part, the martyr's crown. They are not reaping, from their fidelity or labor or testimony or suffering, the full glories they ought to gain.

Life's trials and stresses and sorrows are not martyrdom; they only furnish its arena, its opportunity. A martyr is a *witness,* one who in the face of and at the cost of sorrow, loss, anguish, death, bears testimony to the name and power, love and grace, of Jesus Christ. Merely experiencing pain or sorrow is not the essence and crown of martyrdom, for many have done that whose anguish was inarticulate of any message that told of Jesus. A sufferer may be only a victim. A victim is one who is hurt as a result of being in the path of destructive forces. Men are victims to typhoid fever, to the earthquake, to the ravages which the rum-traffic works even on those who had no share in its sin. Or a sufferer may be more than a victim, and be a sacrifice, conscious or unconscious, willing or unwilling, devoted to please or appease a deity or promote a cause, like the baby in the Ganges, or the company slaughtered for strategy.

One becomes a true martyr only when he steps for-

ward or stands firm with a definite testimony of what he stands for, at the cost of stress and suffering. We often speak, for instance, of our "Martyred Presidents," but only to Lincoln is the term at all accurately applied. Garfield's death, viewed from the human side, was a mournful accident, the joint product of the "spoils system" and political passions working on an evil heart and an unbalanced brain. McKinley was the victim of the social unrest, manifested in the desperate and dastardly act of one who was himself the victim of bad ideas and bad environment, while he felt himself a martyr to his principles. These noble presidents did indeed witness for Christ in their patience and resignation and faith, but that was incidental, not the cause and purpose of their pain. Lincoln's death, unreasonable though it was, came as a direct result of his lifework, the price he paid for the cause he stood for; and yet even he was rather a victim to mistaken feeling, a sacrifice to the cause of national unity, than a deliberate witness in his death.

But even fidelity is not the highest crown of martyrdom, although it assuredly constitutes much of its substance. One may give a clear testimony to the truth as it is in Jesus, submit to the last torture the persecutors can inflict, go down unshaken to the grave, but lack in his crown the brightest jewel. For this jewel is the loving cheerfulness and triumphant faith that, at its brightest gleam, *glories* in the chance for sacrifice, and in its steady, daily glow endures brightly, hopefully, willingly, the strains that come.

"This is that" which sang with Paul and Silas in

the prison, shone forth in the jubilant martyrdoms of the early centuries, and in humbler, more ordinary service has sent the thousands inquiring for the Source of such gladness in conditions so adverse. Without this touch no martyrdom is complete. There may be gold in it, but its luster is feeble and its quality is mingled.

One, for example, has been thrust into a situation which is a direct result of his service of truth or righteousness. He offers a consistent testimony. He illustrates the virtue of steadfast fidelity. But there is not much else that he illustrates. He does not illustrate the resurgent power of Christian faith. No songs rise from his dungeon. The prisoners only wonder at the moans they hear. At the stake there is no "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Rather he catches the firebrands as they come, flings them back, and gives them as good—and as bad—as they send.

Another has undertaken a life of long and expensive witness for Jesus among the heathen, or on our frontier. He went into it with as pure a devotion, as complete a self-sacrifice, as warm a love as ever moved martyr or patriot. When it was entered into the great fact of the venture was seen, but its myriad details were lost in the large "heroic stature" of the whole. Soon the business of translating heroic stature into homely service began, and by and by the little or great privations and lonelinesses and irritations inserted their stings, and roughened life's ways. The devotion did not go, the absorptive love did not die, but alas,—the little fine wrinkles of worry and care

and temper, then even vocal and by and by vociferous complaint, disguised the heroic face and voice, and the life became a witness to a theology, to a truth, to a task, but had ceased to be a witness to the large, loving, tender, triumphant Son of God and Son of Man.

The difficult life of a mother, plainly sustained for the sake of Jesus and in the spirit of Jesus, can be as true and glorious a martyrdom as was ever witnessed by Stephen or Paul or Huss. Crosses and stakes and vats of boiling oil may call for no sturdier heroism and completer abnegation. God bless the mothers—Christ's martyrs of the home! No human heart can fully know, no tongue express, their heroisms! Here, after all, and not in the rarer and more spectacular scenes of fidelity, is Christ's real power shown and glory won. In this case, too, there may be real devotion, sleepless vigilance, labor untiring, unrecompensed and without thought of recompense, the true spirit of him "who loved us, and gave himself up for us." But alas, again! That mother's brow grows furrowed, her voice sharp, her words tart, she ceases to have time for the Scripture and the prayer, she is overloaded by her cares. Then antagonism or slow alienation grows up between her and those whom she loves, for whom she is giving her life, for whose soul's salvation she would, with Paul, if need be, barter her own—another martyr without a crown!

Not wholly. God is not unrighteous to forget such labor of love. Fidelity and witness *are* at the center of all real martyrdom. That mother did witness to love. She was faithful even unto death. Jesus never

fails to see, he never forgets that. He knew Thomas, that despairing lover with the torturing doubts, who saw only death before the living Jesus, and only death behind him who was the Risen One. "Let us also go, that we may die with him." Out of Christ's heart those words could never die. Thomas had the crown of fidelity. What Jesus wished he might have given him was the crown of faith. Jesus counts it much that we are true to him; but he counts it more that in our truth to him, we believe that he is true to us.

For at its base, that is where a martyrdom loses or wins this crowning jewel. It was not, in the case of us Thomases, because our devotion failed, or our desire to do right, that we grew depressed or distorted or sour; it was because we failed to believe practically in Christ's presence and power, to realize him daily to our souls, to take him at his word, to draw on him for hourly strength and sweetness. Never mind why we thus failed; enough to say that we need not. For the upward gaze, for the believing heart, for the life that will take time to be holy, there are still always songs in the night, still the hymns of Paul and Silas prelude the shaking of the dungeon-house and the release of immortal souls. Still Jesus crowns his faithful ones with the coronet of others blessed and saved. "Let no man take thy crown." "Believe in God, believe also in me."

XXI

SYMPATHY THE PROOF OF SPIRITUALITY

THERE are those who appear to think that to be out of patience with the average man or Christian, keen-eyed to all his faults and incompleteness, conscious of superiority, assured that there is a great gulf fixed which he can hardly cross upward, nor you downward, is a sign that one has advanced far beyond his fellows on the road to spiritual knowledge and power. But in the midst of "holiness" such as this the original milk of human kindness has turned to vinegar, and ears once keen to all voices of love and longing cease to hear sweetness in the common speech.

Tennyson suggests the fear that growing spiritual knowledge in his friend Hallam, gone before, should mean growing alienation, when he says, in "In Memoriam":

> "An inner trouble I behold,
> A spectral doubt which makes me cold:
> That I shall be thy mate no more,
> Tho' following with an upward mind
> The wonders that have come to thee,
> Thro' all the secular to-be,
> But evermore a life behind!"

Yet neither the friend who longs need fear, nor the fancied spiritual aristocrat who despises need flatter

himself. Spirituality means more understanding and deeper love, not less and shallower. The supreme test of the spirit is not our knowledge, nor our joys, nor our affinities, so fancied, but our sympathy, our power of appreciation, our entrance with love into our fellows' powers and needs, our discernment and approval of the good in them.

For the deepest and highest spiritual truths are merely growths from the simplest. Progress is not progress away from truths once known, but into them, into their depths. In the soul's first act of surrender and love are wrapped, as in the bulb, all the splendors, perfumes, and flavors of the flower and fruit that are to be. Heaven's most radiant blossoms are growths from the seeds planted and growing upon earth. The supremest secrets of the Spirit are present in germ in the first revelation of God's gospel grace to the newborn soul. That soul has but to follow on, to know all that man can know of the Lord. It could not be otherwise, since God and truth and love are one. If, therefore, you hold in your hand the truth in its simpler stage, you have the heart of the greater. And if that splendid flower you hold, that development of doctrine, that spiritual experience, that inner power, is of totally different species from the blossoms that grow on the lower levels, putting you out of connection and sympathy with them, you may be assured that what you have is of totally different species from the kingdom of heaven; your gorgeous, exclusive plant never came out of the celestial gardens. It is a wild outgrowth of your own imagination or of Satan's hotbed of folly and pride.

The deeper one pierces into the secrets of things, the more he gets into line with the real facts upon the surface. He will not reject that earlier truth. He only holds to it more firmly and sees more in it. He will not despise that other holder of it who has not advanced as far as he. He congratulates him on the progress he has made, and seeks to reveal to him the splendor that he himself has seen. The really profound scholar whose mind has continued to grow unsmothered by his knowledge and pride is not only never hostile or indifferent to the learner; he is at once more deeply interested in him, more at one with him, better able to measure his attainment, see his difficulties, and lead him on. He understands in germ and flower, top and bottom, height and depth, what others know imperfectly and insecurely. Better that scholar for a teacher than he who is but six months or six whole years in advance of his pupil. Better have Jesus for teacher than even John. It is not the holiest who despise the sinfulest. One may measure how far he has *not* climbed, by the distance and disgust he feels in the presence of his sinful brother. The nearer we get to God, the nearer are we to man.

So far from meaning departure from the common truths or the common life, spirituality means more discernment and more pleasure in these things. We are not less able to read our fellows, but more; and it may be taken for granted that the further we can see into the minds and hearts of men, the more we shall see there that is good. True, finer spiritual apprehensions bring to our knowledge more and finer grades in

spiritual quality. What was white once is seen now to be not so white. That must be true when we turn the glass upon ourselves. But when we turn it upon others, we see that what was black is not so black as it looked. Love taketh not account of evil, rejoiceth with the truth, believeth all things, hopeth all things. Believing in good, and hoping much from God, it sees great veins and lodes of noble possibility which other eyes cannot see. The man who is keen to discern evil in his fellow-men would do well to ponder the witch's saying in Macbeth:

> "By the pricking of my thumbs,
> Something wicked this way comes."

It is the hidden affinity of evil, not of good, that apprises you of evil in him.

Sympathy is the child of love. "Feeling for" develops into "feeling with." Without the first, the second never comes. It is love that gives the desire to discern. If I turn away disgusted from that fellow of mine because I am sure there is nothing in him I can find or develop, it is because there is nothing in me that wants to find or develop him. Indifference betokens not fineness, but feebleness, of feeling. Love it is that gives the power to discern. It is by love that we understand man. It is love which translates the prattle of that little child into speech articulate to the mother's heart. It is love that leans over the bedside of the paralytic and pieces together the broken fragments of sound to make the message of that poor separated mind; love that catches the few faint points of moral aspiration and achievement in that chaos of

a ruined life, and discerns the features of a son of God; love that watches the feeble groping after truth by the undeveloped Christian, reads what he is trying to discover and to say, fills out the incoherent story from his own treasure house of experience, and sends it back, a glorious revelation, to that struggling soul. If you cannot read your brother, if you do not want to read your brother, if your heart turns away disgusted from him, the Alpha and the Omega of spirituality is lacking in you. It matters little what you have learned, what you think you have grown to, what you have won; you have not discovered the greatest, nor won the summit. You have not grown up to love. You have faith, such as it is; knowledge, which shall be done away, but the greatest of these—is not yours.

Who was it that understood the weakest human heart, that saw even the feeblest good in the sinfulest, that most tenderly and skillfully adapted his teaching to the most ignorant? Was it not He who felt most, knew most, was most, the summit of holiness and wisdom? He who is most like Him is most spiritual. Between such souls and those who are below them there is no gulf which cannot be crossed. And that is happening in spirit which the poet describes in mind:

> "And what delight can equal those,
> That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
> When one that loves, and knows not, reaps
> A truth from one that loves and knows."

Love, plus knowledge, is sympathy—and spirituality.

XXII

THE TOUCH OF THE SUN

THERE is a prevailing impression that the best way to get at the ore of goodness in human nature is through pulverizers and crucibles. Sometimes it is. There are ores that no other treatment will reduce, and neither man nor nature, apparently, has yet produced a diamond without enormous heat under intensest pressure. There are blossoms of character which, like blossoms in the garden, thrive best in shade.

Yet a man is neither a stone nor a plant. His virtues will not be extracted or compacted in spite of himself. He will yield them, or grow them, or produce them, by the output of his own vitality and will. Some solvent which will secure on his part a voluntary loosening of the bonds that unite his good and his evil, some stimulus which arouses his own inner energies, is what he needs. Frost strikes many of us as furnishing such a stimulus, a most promising agency for ripening, strengthening, and beautifying character. Yet we may question whether frost is often more than a second-best method, used because the other has not been applied, or has not met response. The hardest, strongest woods, the most gorgeous flowers, and the sweetest fruits are grown in the tropics. If we can get the gold in no other way, we may use the

crusher and the crucible. If nothing but frost will bring out the rich crimson, let the north wind blow. But, so far as we mortals are concerned, is there not a more excellent way? God knows when his fruits need the autumn, and when his ore needs the furnace. Let him manage those. It is safer for us to stick to the summer and the milder solvents. The real human thing that finds human gold, and extracts it when it is found, is a very sunny and pleasant thing: it is expectant sympathy.

Sympathy is the key into life. Until we sympathize with this neighbor of ours, enter into his thoughts, desire the best in him and the best for him, exercise our loving imagination to see under his dross what is really gold, we are shut out of any treasures that he may have. We may be deceived, sometimes, by imagining choice metal where there is none, but we are much more likely to be deceived by failing to see it when it is there. If our sympathy is in good working order, by a sort of electric thrill the gold in us will signal its response to gold in him. If he discovers our sympathy—and how can he help it if it be genuine and strong?—then our discovery of him is tenfold easier.

On the other hand, nothing so draws together the defensive leaves of that sensitive plant the human heart as hostility, or criticism, or even uncomprehension. Men will not wear their hearts upon their sleeves for daws to peck at. They will rather thrust out a hedge of spears which utterly misrepresents them. Nor is this always a matter of will. They simply cannot reveal themselves. Something chokes them.

Christ himself could do no mighty works in Nazareth, because of its unbelief; and the feeble good in men is frozen at its source by arctic air. But when they can see in the eye, and hear in the voice, and feel in the hand, if not full comprehension, at least desire for comprehension, they open their hearts. We have entrance, and can see all that is in the house, riches that no other ever saw.

In this expectant sympathy is not only knowledge, but power. In the boat race in Vergil, it is said of one of the crews, "they are able because they think they are able" (*possunt quia posse videntur*). But might it not be translated, "they are able because they are seen to be able"? Are not the shouts of the confident partisans along the shore at least as potent as the muscles of the crew? "There is Emerson! I like to see him stand up there talking about truth and right and virtue as if he believed we were all as good as he is!" said one of his hearers. "Of course I succeeded!" exclaimed Pasteur. "How could I help it, when from my earliest boyhood everybody expected that I would succeed?" When the flag goes up at Nelson's masthead, "England expects every man to do his duty," it will go hard but that every man will do his duty. There are those, it is true, who will not rise to this stimulus, and others whom it will stimulate only to lazy self-confidence; but then, not even the tropics can germinate a seed that is nonexistent or dead.

"Blessed are they that expect little," we say jocularly, "for they shall not be disappointed." Where such pessimists are the chief influence, verily they are

not very often disappointed. He who expects much is sometimes disappointed, but his gains far outweigh his losses. Mankind, taken as a whole, will respond like a spirited horse to the trust we put in it, and will reach or surpass the bounds we set, if we give it the cheering word. Who does not know someone, young or old, who in certain surroundings was a flat failure, but who, transplanted, began to blossom and bear fruit in a manner utterly unexpected by those he had left? That was precisely the reason: it *was* unexpected. Underrated, discredited, viewed with suspicion, prejudged, he could not bud and blossom in that chilly air. When he was brought where men believed in him, and showed that they looked for greater things, he felt the warmth and the sunshine, and he expanded. Cinderella became the princess. Love was the fairy godmother who renamed failure into success. "There are no bad plants," says Victor Hugo, "only bad cultivation."

Of course it is from the sympathy that the expectancy gets its spring and power. Expectancy, alone, is often like the cold light of the arctics. The very sturdiest may be stimulated by it, but it may chill to death anything less. Luria, in Browning's tragedy, is a mighty spirit, and great things are expected of him, but he is tested to the utmost by the cold aloofness, the selfish detachment, of the men he is serving. The first step in the help that anyone can get from another is when he says, "He understands me." The second is when he says, "He believes in me." The third, which makes the others live, is when he says, "He loves me." In the helping soul the order

is reversed. "I love him," is the first. "I understand him," is the second. And then, as surely as the night follows the day, "I believe in him"; for if we love and understand any soul on earth, we will believe in him. No one else may. We will. Knowledge fails. Wisdom fails. Love "never faileth; it taketh not account of evil, it rejoiceth in the truth, it beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things."

If we do that, and if there is any germ of good, by God's grace it will grow. That is the master secret of every great teacher, every great reformer, every great individual philanthropist. In Hezekiah's Song the text of our Standard Revision reads, "Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption." The margin and the Hebrew read, "Thou hast loved my soul from the pit." Love him out! This was the method of Colonel Pillsbury, who made his Albany penitentiary the gate of heaven into a new life for so many souls. His loving expectancy, his fearless trust in them, brought out the good, if there was any. It was Jerry McAuley's method, and S. H. Hadley's. It was Paul's. Have you thought of the tact that loaded Paul's lips or pen with compliments when he began a letter or speech? It was loving optimism, discerning the best in man, and seeking to make it blossom in the sunlight of recognition.

Supremely was this the method of the Master. In this zone of perfect understanding, perfect love, and expectation, everybody who was not encased in Pharisaic pride or hate opened petals and expanded. The

hard-headed publican, the harlot even, the poor demoniac, the impetuous Peter, the poetic John,—how that touch brought them all out!

Is there any good reason why this atmosphere should not prevail? It ought to be common, for it is normal. Sin is exotic. Hate and suspicion and ill-will are importations,—very early, it is true, but they do not belong here.

> "This world is full of beauty, as unseen worlds above,
> And if we did our duty, it would be as full of love."

But the love must bring out the beauty, not the beauty the love.

XXIII

SYMPATHY'S GOLDEN GAINS

SYMPATHY is a duty. It is not simply desirable that we should have the love that understands our fellow-men, but to God our Father and to men our brethren we are under obligation to have it. And it is as clear, also, that sympathy is power, the key into the hearts of men, the sunshine that develops the best in them. But we do not so often remember that, rich as is its fruitage for those upon whom it is exercised, its fruitage in those who exercise it is even more abundant, and more blessed. For sympathy, like mercy, is twice blest; it blesses him that gives and him that takes, but it blesses most him that gives. Shower its gifts ever so richly, and you get back more than you bestow. In this race you are forever worsted, —that is to say, bettered.

The first abounding gain of such sympathy as this is in the acquisitions that come to us through our heightened powers of perception. These become the sensitive receiving apparatus of a spiritual wireless telegraphy, to catch the well-nigh innumerable messages with which the world is pulsating, and which otherwise would be utterly unperceived. The man who has cultivated in himself the habit of trying to understand and comprehend and feel what his neighbors are feeling lives in a world of bewildering wealth.

"I am a man, and I count nothing that is human as alien to myself," said the old Roman. If that had been true, then in due time all that was best of the human had come to him. These fellow-men of mine, often those who are apparently the poorest and the shallowest, have so much to give me! Their faith, hope, and heroism are being poured into me from the four corners of the earth. I was "sympathizing with him," I thought,—and felt a thrill of patronizing self-gratulation as I thought it; but he showed me an act, or a life, of such love, devotion, greatness of heart, as made me blush at my condescension. Much I may have given him, but he assuredly gave me more. And this is the law of the spirit: he who gives most, grows most. Wealth of mind and heart and spirit is proportioned precisely and inevitably to power and breadth and depth of sympathy.

In this breadth of perception and widening wealth of experience we are all the while gaining increased power of perception. The trained senses of the expert, or rather his trained mind,—for it is not with the eyes but with the mind that we see,—is the wonder of the layman, yet it is nothing but intelligent and interested effort transmuted into habit, and that into an almost unerring perception and insight. It grows with the active years. What a priceless reward it is to find ourselves year by year able to read the better hopes and aspirations of men more and more readily and accurately! The cynic, no doubt, deepens his cynicism as he practices that, just as the microscopist can, if he will, see more defects as he gains more skill; but we can see more beauties. We can find more gold

in the high-grade ore than we ever could before, and gold in ore seemingly so poor that it would have escaped us utterly last year.

And not only find it, but get it. Every man must be conscious that his life has what the chemists call a definite reaction. He stimulates other men either weakly or powerfully, and either to good or to evil. It is this power in ourselves that our own sympathy is stimulating. We radiate spiritual wealth in the most blessed and effectual way, which consists, not in transferring some of our own possessions over to him, but in calling out from him some of his own possibilities otherwise forever latent and therefore lost. The induction coil does not impart electricity, it simply calls it out. By exercise the magnet becomes more powerful. And we shall find ourselves more and more able, as the years go on, to draw out from our fellow-men the currents of truth, love, and life, where once our efforts would have been fruitless. How often that appears in the skilled and loving soul-winner, or the inspiring teacher! And the one secret of his increasing power is trained and strengthened sympathy. Every man rightly aspires to be a force. How blessed to be a force like that!

For this means increase of what is the greatest power in all the world, the power of the heart-throb, human and divine, which is the root of sympathy. The intellect alone never produced real sympathy. The will alone never can. It is born of loving desire working with and in these. This is the power which most needs increase in this world of ours, and for whose increase in ourselves we can be most grateful.

There be those who protest that they "have too much heart." Possibly they have—for their own convenience; but it will usually be found a case of too much surface sensitiveness and too little capacity for unselfish living; heart enough to feel, but not enough to love. True love is never afraid of heart-throbs, it covets them. There never yet was danger from, or of, heart hypertrophy. "Enlargement of the heart" is not a spiritual disease, but the antidote and a cure for most.

This is the power reckoned highest in the kingdom of heaven. It was not Mrs. Browning's wide reading, for example, and reach of intellect, great as both were, that gave her place as a spiritual force, and on the spiritual summits of the ages. It was that power and willingness to enter into the sorrows and joys, needs and longings, of the slave, of the child, of the Italians among whom she lived so long, that heart whose strings vibrated with a responsiveness intense to the point of pain, to every throb of pain or joy that came to her perception. We are measured, not by what we know, or hold, or can, but by how we love.

But the summit of these golden gains is found in the way we are brought closer in feeling and fact, in act and being, to our Master, which is the whole end and aim of our Christian life on earth so far as we ourselves are concerned. It is the goal of our effort, hope, and yearning that we shall be like him. And the road to that goal is by the path of sympathy. As we grow in heart-power we grow in power to understand him. None but the man who has watched the helpless, hungry multitude till he has felt the yearn-

ing of Jesus to come to their help at any cost, is able to apprehend the real nature of Jesus. And no one can see him as he is who is not like him. None will deny that the one thing supremely characteristic of Jesus, the Son of God, is his sympathy. For that is what he is, God's incarnate sympathy, the power and willingness of God to enter into our every joy and sorrow, to accommodate those infinite activities to our slow or faltering paces, able and eager to deal gently with the ignorant and erring, yet able and ready to show the boldest wing that ever tried to soar its way to God a higher path than any it had dreamed. His sympathy is sympathy, not to the point of apprehension only, nor even to absolute comprehension only, nor even to identification of feeling only, but to absolute surrender of self, "who loved us, and gave himself up for us." This, and not his power or insight, or even his deity alone, if they could be alone, is his scepter over all hearts, his crown of glory.

And if the crown of Jesus is sympathy, our sympathy finds its crown when it makes us like him.

XXIV

SYMPATHY FOR THE STRONG

SYMPATHY for the weak is a precious and late-won gain of our race. The first impulse of tame or savage animals and men is to "pick upon" the feeble or the crippled. Weakness invited oppression. To be "down" was pretty soon to be "out." But it is now an axiom of all self-respecting peoples,—still not too fully acted upon, yet advancing in power,—that "they that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak." Very beautiful are the multiplying instances of this in our hospitals, asylums, schools, protective laws, the gifts of the wealthy to the poor.

This has been so hard to learn, however, that few have advanced to the next step, or dreamed that now and then it is a duty of the weak to bear the infirmities of the strong. For the strong man does not seem to need it. He stands there sturdily supporting the mighty weight that rests upon him, or moves ahead with seemingly unwearied sinews, breasting waves that we feel we could not face, unshaken amid disasters which for us would break up all the foundations of things. We give him our confidence, our admiration, our envy even; but we never think of sympathy. Quite likely he never asks it. His pride may be too great, or it may be part of his task to maintain without a sign that sturdy erectness, that unmoved face. We

are deficient in imagination, and the trials and sorrows and struggles of the heart beyond the mask we cannot even fancy. Perhaps we are simply selfish, and are willing to accept the results which bring us the blessing without too curious an inquiry into processes and costs. It may be that we modestly consider that our little help would be ineffective, our sympathy an impertinence.

A little study of strength and of strong men will show how mistaken we are, and what a blunder, as well as what an injustice, we are committing. One will find from the look of an eye, a random word, a groan wrung out in the hour of agony, a confidential disclosure, even the anger or the jest which seeks to relieve an awful tension, that not only "the bravest are the tenderest," but that the strongest have most yearned for this strength that comes from the love and comprehension and longing of the neighbor heart. Elijah breaks under the thought that "I, even I only, am left." Paul's sensitive nature feels to the quick the departure of those who "love this present world," is refreshed even more by the practical sympathy of the Philippians, "thanks God and takes courage" when he sees the Roman brethren at Three Taverns. So with Luther: again and again the love of his friends, the courage of his wife, the power of God's Spirit, must fill the hungry heart and reinforce the strength of him who would face his duty "though it rained Duke Georges." And, supremely, the Son of man, bearing the infirmities of "them that were his own" as well as the indifference and hate of those who opposed him, loved to lean upon the bosom of John,

and exclaimed with a heart-break as he woke the troubled sleepers in Gethsemane, "What, could ye not watch with me one hour?"

We may confidently reckon that where there is such strength there is such yearning, that the fountains which slake humanity's thirst themselves grow thirsty, too. It is true of many a helper of humanity, as Mrs. Browning sang of William Cowper,

> "O men, this man in brotherhood your weary paths beguiling,
> Groaned inly while he gave you peace, and died while ye were smiling."

We may well question the reality of the strength underneath which there is no such longing.

However godlike some men may seem and be, there are no longer any demigods, moving amid earthly needs and burdens with unearthly power at will. The Son of God himself, so far as his own needs were concerned, for us men emptied himself that he might share the real burdens, as well as "divide the spoil" with the strong. Your champion has no hidden source of power not available to other men. He does not meet the burdens and battles of life as the Roman emperor in the arena met the gladiators,—they armed with lath and he with steel. The giant load which the giant lifts calls for the same quiver of contracting and protesting muscle that we need when we lift our lesser one just within, but just up to, the limit of our strength.

His demands, indeed, are proportionately greater. Somehow strains gather along the line of greatest strength. The greatest strength is won and held by

the greatest struggle. Satan brings up his heaviest batteries before that point. God uses his choice servant for the work for which he is most fitted. We pile up our burdens on the most capable. Before we suspect it there is a mountain of responsibility, of trial, of temptation, pressing down on one poor man, while our sympathies go straying to some other part of the field. He may not break under the strain—and he may. Even though he does not, there often springs to his lips the desolate cry of David, "No man careth for my soul," or, "I looked and there was none to help. . . . I have trodden the winepress alone." How much one word or look would mean to him!

It is said that the Pilgrim Fathers had to endure the toils, privations, and dangers of pioneer New England, but the Pilgrim Mothers had to endure all these and the Pilgrim Fathers besides! Our strong man has to be strength, not only for himself, but for us into the bargain. The "care of all the churches" rests on Paul. Luther must uphold the Reformation. To be a prop is exacting enough, but your great man must be a propeller as well, and a fountain also. This weakness round about him is continually extracting strength. Whence shall he refill his fountains? At the ocean of divine energy, no doubt. But God has a way of making human sympathy the channel to his power. There is more than cold water in the cups men bring the prophets. It used to be said that the continued heat of the sun was from the impact of well-nigh numberless meteors falling steadily on its surface. No man can measure how much of the

abounding energy of some great spiritual sun, whose strength seems all his own, is due to the impact of our love and fellowship and words of cheer. The greater the sun, and the larger the sphere it floods with light and heat, the more it needs to have its inner fires perpetually renewed. If the great men are not made, they are assuredly maintained, under God, by us lesser men who "stand around them" and give them of our hearts for food.

We have had a notion, not only that they did not need us, but that they did not want us. On the contrary, if a man is truly great among men, a force to comfort, to empower, to compel in the direction of spiritual advance, it is by virtue of his own sympathy with them, his power to enter into their wants and needs, the yearning of his own heart to bless. He is great in proportion to his sensitiveness, his force of feeling, his force of outgo. Every cell of that heart which so freely sends forth its riches hungers for the arrival of like riches from his fellow-men. This love wants love back again. Love back again will stimulate still richer floods from still deeper founts. What we get from him will be more precious than what we give, but that he must have. If that prophet of God has really been able to bring a blessed message to your soul, you can be sure that you have something for which his soul is hungering. It is not necessary at all that your gift should be as great, as choice, as rich, as his. Trust the alchemy of love and the Spirit to enrich and multiply what you bring; but bring it. The form is not the essential. What this man wants

is the thrill of your comprehending love; the particular wire along which it travels is of little moment.

And once in a while forget all about his being strong, and remember only that he is a man,—needy, weak, tempted, longing for a human word of cheer.

XXV

INSIDEDNESS

SOME of us are marked by onesidedness, which has its advantages. Others, far fewer, have many-sidedness, which is admirable. But the quality that makes for real power is insidedness. How often we are struck by a grave lack in some otherwise commendable writing or speaking, and, worse still, in living, too. It is good, true, just, well put, but it wants a certain vitality, a compelling grip. It does not get hold of us. It did not well up out of the speaker's inmost soul with an impulse that could not be denied, and that brought up blood with it. It does not get inside of us, because it did not come from inside of him, and he had never been inside of it.

Insidedness is necessary for reality. The person who moves us must not only mean what he says, he must know it; and not only know it, but feel it from the depths. There have been many pretty theories of the uses of affliction which one twinge of real pain in the theorizer sends flying. You ask the surgeon if a certain minor operation will "hurt." "No," he smilingly answers. And it doesn't—hurt him! One feels a little like that with certain mental comforters. This shining gold of spiritual gain which you say God extracts from our dross-ridden sorrows,—you tell me about it; but have you ever seen its color yourself?

The simple personal testimony of even a smaller thing would help me more than all your rhapsodies of the spheres you have read about.

There is no real life-power without this. People wondered for a long time why you could not put together the precise ingredients of certain mineral springs and get the same results anywhere, and still more why the bottled water itself, away from the spring, was so markedly inferior. Then they discovered that as the water gushed up from its inner fount it was *radio-active*. The cunningest chemist could not put *that* in away from the spring, and the tightest bottles could not retain it long. Only experience can put radio-activity into truth, and the most vital truth loses some or all of its power when it leaves the "original package." It cannot be "decanted" very successfully.

This is what makes the preaching or teaching or consolation of the young so shallow and so sapless. There may be no lack of intellect or of truth in what they say, no lack of real earnestness, or good-will, or love. We admire their fine enthusiasm, their zeal for the glory of God. It is refreshing to see them

"So young, so strong, so very sure of God."

But as they hand us their savory pottage, or sovereign remedy, we say with the hungry Isaac, "How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son?" and the taste and potency do not belie our wonder. It is the absence of this indispensable that neutralizes so many of the best cups of blessing which the so-called upper

classes hold to the lips of their needy brethren. They never get on the inside, they never really let the others in; there is the outgo, of words, work, wish, or money, but not of life. The young and earnest student of sociology empties his pockets and dons overalls to understand the needs, problems, feelings, of the laborer out of work. But at any moment he can end his play-spell at work and want. He will never be on the inside till he gets where no telegraph can help him, and where it is work or starve, and the job for life unless he can work out of it.

The very meaning and power of Christ's incarnation hinges on the fact that it was a sincere and real entrance into the actual conditions of humanity, its infirmity and limitations, tempted in all points like as we, made like unto his brethren. It was necessary, in his case, not that he should understand us, but that we might understand him. He had always known and comprehended the pangs and sorrows and trials of the sons of men. But he needed really and evidently to share our sorrows by personal experience, that his words of faith and comfort and sympathy might have in our ears the ring of insidedness. The Christ who can really help must come with divine power and love, but he must come all the way in, must be one of us absolutely, truly, indissolubly:

"He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most weak.
'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my flesh that I seek
In the Godhead."

Insidedness is never cheap or easy. He who aims

at it must make up his mind to stop short at no payment that may be demanded,—and any payment may be. He will find himself often, indeed always, in the position of One of whom they said, "He saved others, himself he cannot save."

That there must be deliberate effort of the imagination to "put yourself in his place," needs no saying; and this takes the hardest sort of mental and heart work. No indolent thinker or listless lover can ever enter in. It is to be suspected that many of us are too lazy and too selfish to take the first step into the place of power. But actual intended contact with sorrow, suffering, trouble, sin, is indispensable. Some of us have hearts so tender that we really cannot bear to come into touch with pain. There are hospitals; we are willing to support them, but we prefer to keep away from them and work by substitute. But salvation comes not by proxy, but by proximity. Kipling put his finger on one great danger of our America, and our world, when he called attention to our charming suburban, restricted districts, with their sequestered quiet and "twirly whirly hoses," while the great seething slums a mile or two away are sending up their stench to heaven and stewing poisons for all the body politic. Cloistered sensitiveness that will not face need and sin, and plunge into their deeps, has no praise from God and no help for man. Slumming as a recreation may be tarred from the pit, but slumming as reconnoisance is heaven's searchlight into human need.

"It will coarsen and blunt us, cheapen the world as a place of abode, rob us of a certain easy op-

timism? 'Where ignorance is bliss, 'tis folly to be wise?'" Well, if with familiarity with the less pleasant aspects of life comes a deeper pity for humanity, and a defter touch of healing on its wounds, the loss has been slight, and the gain has been infinite. The care-free ignorance of youth gives way to that sober coloring which life takes on from an eye that hath looked on man's mortality; but for the first time we see things as they are, and our real optimism and expectancy and courage abide, for they spring from deep faith in God and knowledge of his grace.

But real innerness goes much farther, to actual entrance for ourselves into the deeps of sorrow, struggle, pain. We may as well understand that we shall be shallow helpers until we have been deep sufferers. If we are to bring life to dying men, we must have felt the bitterness of death ourselves. This goes far to explain the manifold experiences of the choicest children of God. Like Job, they were tried that they might inspire others, and comfort their fellows with the comfort wherewith they had been comforted of God. "It became him, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings." There was no other road to it, even for the Son of God. If we share in that glory of his, we must travel his path.

Is insidedness worth its price? One who faces the demand for this quality in speaking, writing, living, may feel rise within him the question or protest: "Then I am asked for this service to coin my heart's blood, to distill for one draught or drop, ofttimes by the slow heats and pains of years, the richest depths

of my being?" Precisely. Exactly that is the price. There is nothing that can help humanity but just that. Help comes by nothing else than the transfusion of blood, and the blood is the life.

It all depends on what we value. If our aim were money, of course it is not worth it. For admiration, though many are willing to pay it, the price is far too high. Temporal power of almost any sort is pinchbeck exchange for this gold. But to bring comfort to a sore heart, joy to a darkened soul, courage to a beleaguered life, great strength to one who otherwise had fallen, perhaps forever, nothing in this world except the glory of God is so precious; and this is the glory of God. If we can compass these things by coining our heart's blood, let us thank God that we have blood to coin. When our soul has thus been made an offering for sin and sorrow, like the Master, we shall be satisfied, for we shall see our seed, we shall prolong our days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

XXVI

THE GRACE OF GRACIOUSNESS

LIVING is one long "give and take." We are always giving or receiving, making concessions or accepting them, winning victories or suffering defeats, or, as partners in the work of life, furnishing our share to the partnership, or receiving their share from our comrades. We can so play any or all of these parts that each transaction shall bring profit and pleasure to both parties, and be a splendid "bargain," like mercy,—"twice blest; it blesseth him that gives and him that takes." And with the grace of graciousness it will be so. For among all the flavors and fragrances of life, nothing adds to life's charm and pleasure like that which we call graciousness; and nothing can so render tasteless or even repulsive the choicest life as its absence or its opposite.

But how ungraciously we sustain our rôles! We give,—and give so grudgingly, or so patronizingly, or so triumphantly, or so clumsily, that it is like pelting a man with blessings; the sting of the giving robs the gift of its grace, and the receiver almost feels that he can never quite forgive the giver. Yet our very manner and spirit could have added to the gift its richest charm, which would have lingered after the gift itself had gone. And our taking is often as awkwardly or unlovingly managed. We receive almost as with a

sense of injury, as if in a world of real justice the relations would be reversed, or as if somehow our independence were assailed and our dignity insulted, or at least as though we were receiving no more than our just deserts,—and we rob the giver of that generous pleasure which is his chief reward, and ourselves of that generous gratitude which is our chief blessing.

How few of us, again, are able to make concessions or acknowledge defeat handsomely! It is with groans and grimaces, like a sulky camel, that we give up, if ever we really do. We could march out of our citadels with all the honors of war, flags flying, trumpets blowing, and in the moment of defeat vanquish our victor by our self-control and courage, and better, by the power of love. But we are twice beaten, once by him and once by our own sore hearts. Still harder to carry off well is victory. Each flash of our eye is an arrow in the heart of the defeated, and adds bitterness to his losses. Yet our part might be done with such gentleness, such tacit apology for triumph, such generous distress at his distress, such willingness to concede where we were under no obligation to concede, such good-will, such endeavor to ease his burden, that, like Lee whose sword Grant would not take at Appomattox, he, too, is twice conquered, once by our arms, and once by our heart.

Even the more prosaic "give and take" of partnership is too often robbed of what might be a pleasure, and made to chafe and irritate. Half of the family jars, the church disagreements, the class difficulties, are utterly needless. A drop of the lubricant of graciousness would remove the friction, prevent the

heat, suppress the shriek. For in most of these cases there is no real desire to injure or to withhold. The actors are really one, and perhaps in their heart of hearts are willing to die for one another; but they have not learned the fine art of living for and with one another. It was a little roughness that made the "hot box" which brought the whole train to a standstill; an atom of oil would have prevented it.

The real charm of life is never seen until one has felt the touch of a spirit who has this flavor of graciousness. It becomes the throned monarch better than his crown. It *is* his crown. A refusal from him is pleasanter than a favor from some others, and the smallest or simplest act of kindness becomes fragrant with benediction. Even the plausible counterfeit of this grace in the superficial courtesies and amenities of social life gives a charm which is worth all it costs, and gives the lie to the notion that rough and ready bluntness is necessarily a sturdy and valuable virtue.

But graciousness is a grace, not one of the "airs and graces." The society woman may school herself to self-control and the pleasant look and smile in all circumstances, "mistress of herself, though china fall," but the robe is thin, and life's friction may wear it to shreds, or some untoward breeze may brush it aside. The real graciousness is deeper and more enduring. It is a virtue exercised, not a virtue assumed. It is a grace, a real achievement of the Spirit of God in the heart and life of man.

When we analyze the ungraciousness that deprives and embitters and irritates, we see that it is compounded of forces and tendencies deep in the sinful

human heart, which "grace" must conquer. Our ungraciousness in giving springs from pride, or from the covetousness of possession, or from sinful lack of sympathy and imagination. Our receiving is unhandsome because we are deficient in love, and are full of that sour pride that finds it hard to acknowledge a favor. The triumph that rankles is the child of overgrown self-love or ungrown love for others.

The ancestry of the grace of graciousness is not hard to trace. One has but to go through a few verses of the thirteenth of First Corinthians and substitute a word here and there: "'Graciousness' suffereth long and is kind; 'graciousness' vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, . . . seeketh not its own; . . . believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." It is simply love in exercise, love that speaks in the eye, thrills in the hand, caresses on the tongue, blossoms in the life. It is a grace imparted, for it can come only from a heart filled with the Spirit of God; otherwise it is either counterfeit or shallow. But it is a grace which must be exercised. It will not come involuntarily. It needs incessant practice. We must school ourselves to this thoughtful love, this interest in others, this whole-hearted delight in their good and happiness, this willingness to express. It has to be willed, many times, when inclination is against it. It is to exercise in look and word and act the abundant good-will toward men which we have learned of the Master. It is, in daily life, in face of the daily demand, simply to "put on the Lord Jesus Christ."

XXVII

THE PENALTIES OF THE SEAT OF THE SCORNFUL

THE materials for scorn are near at hand and in great abundance. The frailties of our fellow-men, slight or great, are very many, and so are our own virtues, which shine in our eyes so resplendently by contrast. Though an unheavenly feeling of satisfaction in another's shortcomings may not come prominently to the surface, and even may not exist in many of us, yet among men and women who have righteous instincts and an admiration for perfection scorn is likely to have an appeal peculiarly strong, because then it masquerades as righteous indignation, which is a sentiment of God. It is hard to tell, unfortunately, just how much of this is made up of our own sense of superiority, ill-nature, and pride, and just how much is real and glowing love for the good and hatred of the evil. It is a very safe thing to adopt the Scripture motto, even when our indignation flames at some particularly flagrant ineptitude or iniquity, and "give place unto the wrath of God, for it is written, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompense, saith the Lord." We must not be laxly indifferent to evil, but we are not usually God's appointed executioners, either with the sword of temporal justice or the thunderbolts of moral wrath.

Scorn is a habit to which the reformer, or one who has reforming instincts, is especially prone. Conscious of his own high purpose, seeing sun-clear his own noble aim, for which he is ready to sacrifice ease, comfort, wealth, and even life itself, he encounters the blindness, sluggishness, selfishness, cowardice, and even hypocrisy of men. His soul is hot within him as he sees them rejecting God's call to service. His heart is wrung at sight of the ravages wrought by the evil he combats. Insensibly, he begins to despise these men of little insight, or little faith, or little courage, or little virtue. He sees, as he thinks, that they make up the majority, and he begins to lean over toward general misanthropy. Let him beware! He has begun to form the habit of scorn, and it is exacting its sure penalties of him.

Scorn is evil in its effect on those on whom it falls. It is oxygen to the answering hatred it evokes, and nitrogen to the love, the kindliness, the aspiration, of those who are its objects. A hardy soul, indeed, is it that can flourish in this atmosphere; an opulent and loving soul, with deep inward sources, whose milk of kindness is not turned at least to answer scorn with scorn. But like all feelings, good or bad, its chief effect is upon him who cherishes it. There are few blights like that which settles on those who sit in the seat of the scorner. It is withering to the soul. It smothers the nobler feelings while it is stimulating the unlovely ones. The spiritual pride it engenders is offensive to God and man, and dangerous to its possessor. Phariseeism of the most virulent and yet unconscious sort, it hides from the man his own true

condition, and encourages him to send forth such evil branches and blossoms, to excuse himself in such attitudes, practices, or even vices, as are often worse than the evil he condemns. And even though he may be saved from any such open and flagrant outward sin, there is engendered in his soul a bitterness which turns to gall whatever comes into his mind. His habitual emotion is contempt, and contempt is not far from hatred. To become a soul of vitriol is perhaps scorn's deepest penalty.

There are many other penalties. There is the scorner's failure to get the best out of his fellow-men. He has so accustomed himself to detecting evil odors that he misses all the perfume. The perfume is very sweet and very abundant. It is astonishing what an enormous amount of good there is in people who in some ways are just objects of condemnation. Even in rainy Ireland there are in every year one hundred and sixty-five days when it does not rain. How misplaced and misused is the moral and spiritual keenness which is employed in discerning defects instead of excellencies, and how the scorner, under the guise of righteous indignation, robs his own heart!

More serious, it may be, is the tendency to set us apart from, or in open opposition to, the great bulk of our fellows, and so, in fact, to sever us from connection with the great currents which are sweeping the world along. For while at the beginning of any reform, and often for a long while after, only the few march to the new music and the many are out of tune, yet the great movements are in the end those of the majority. It is the general heart that moves onward

into light. It happens with this man, however, that he has the habit of disagreement, and he is bound to march with the few under any circumstances. He is permanently "in the objective case." Like Walter Savage Landor on one occasion, when he obscurely caught the purport of a statement, he shouts out, "I object to it entirely, Sir! What was it you were saying?" He has gotten out of gear with humanity; he is a mere brake, a sea-anchor, to retard its progress.

This is no fancy picture. It has happened to more than one earnest reformer and noble soul. He began by being a prophet of God most high; he ended by being a common scold. He began as a pioneer and guide of humanity far in advance of it; he now drags far in the rear, seeking to hold it back. If he had kept his eyes open to the good, if he had steadily recognized that while the head of humanity may be wrong, and its heart to-day not strenuous enough for good, yet its instincts are for the right, and God is working with it; if he had sought to see the elements of truth in the movements outside of his own, he would not thus have been lost in shallows and in miseries, but would have known how to take the current when it served and be borne on to victory. Could anything be sadder than to see that old prophet stranded on the shore of uselessness, railing at the rising tide which is sweeping on to accomplish the very things which are nearest to his deepest heart? Scorn did it.

And in this condition, unhappy, bitter, convinced that the world is all wrong, the man is often the easier prey of some fad or fancy which may be sweeping the

unthinking into absurdity and error. Once he would have been a rock against its influence. But he is now permanently in the opposition, and whatsoever is of the opposition is therefore right and true. He has nothing now to balance over against his own opinion and that of the little sect that now enchants him; he has so long held the opinion of the majority of little worth that his thought has no ballast or rudder.

And scorn may work a deeper injury than any of these; it may get us out of sympathy with Jesus Christ. Indeed, he who scorns is already out of sympathy with the Master of men. Jesus knew righteous indignation; he did not know scorn. There was in him none of that self-righteousness, that contempt, that sour delight in others' faults. He denounced, and not without sarcasm, but he loved while he did it. That is an achievement so difficult for us that it will be wise for us to confine ourselves to one phase of the process—love. His example is worthy, but our powers are small. Assuredly, he who sees faults and not virtues, who dwells on evil and not on good, who despises instead of loving, and almost hates him who disagrees or who is disapproved, has drifted away from Christ. There is little fellowship between the two. The nominal connection may not be severed—and sometimes it may. He may keep his outward religious service; his faith may have suffered no eclipse; his heart's purpose may be as true as ever. But as certainly as love and hate are antipodes, this man is following his Lord afar off. The tender, satisfying, thrilling presence of Jesus his Lord, the lov-

ing Christ, is not his, for how can two walk together unless they be agreed?

This is a painful picture, but is it not a faithful picture? Some of its details may be found in the life-history of all men, and all of its details may be found in the life-history of some men. This is the goal toward which we take the first steps when we begin the habit of scorn. We may never fully reach it. God grant we never shall. But why should we move even a step toward it? The remedy is not far to seek, although it will take much effort to apply it. A heart which counts others better than itself, which resolutely sees good as well as evil, which resolutely sees only good where seeing evil will do no good, which wishes only good things to its fellows, which is so aware of its own shortcomings that it has no time or energy or disposition to criticise others, which keeps in close touch with the loving heart of Jesus Christ,—that heart will never be bound in the chains of the habit of scorn. It lives in the thirteenth of First Corinthians. It will reap to the human full the beatitudes: "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

XXVIII

THE IMPOSTURE OF "APPEAL"

"DOES it 'appeal' to me?" is a favorite test with a good many of us. We feel that we have within us a surer test than any outward standard, in our own instinctive attractions or repulsions. "That does not appeal to me," we say of a cause, and in an instant this becomes a final reason why that cause should go on without help from us; of a doctrine, and, as if forever classified by an unfailing touch-stone, that doctrine is to us as if it were not; of a person, and he is at once shut out of our thoughts: he is as a heathen and a publican.

There is a show of reason in this. The greater the unforced fervor with which we espouse a cause, the more effective, perhaps, our aid will be. If a teaching, however backed by ancient or weighty names, does not find response in our own thinking or thrill our deepest fibers, it can have little power in us or through us.

Nevertheless, this deference to "appeal" is too often a lazy, feckless, ne'er-do-weel notion, a sop to inclination, indolence, and indifference. It is likely to mean shallowness in thought, dullness in feeling, and selfishness in act. It is often a robber of the first rank. On its account, movements which deserve every throb of sympathy, and every ounce of strength we

could command, fail of our aid. It shuts us out of the widest and highest reaches of truth. It robs us of many of the sweetest fellowships life could offer. And by it some of the purest and strongest souls who have blessed the world have been kept from that strength and blessing of sympathy which was their hunger and their due.

Its basal error lies in thinking that our part in the world is to be acted upon rather than to act. It is not our business to retire within the inner fortress of our lives and decide whether certain things bring against us batteries of appeal weighty enough to force us to let them in, nor even to stand at open outer gates ready to admit them if they answer certain tests we find registered in our feelings or our prejudices. Our part is an aggressive one, to use or affect for the better whatever we touch, and to touch whatever we can, in view of all life's thronging duties. The prime question of life is never what appeals to us, but to what can we apply ourselves, with all our powers, so as to draw from it strength and beauty for others, or bring it into accord with the purpose or pattern of God, or aid it in its work.

Whether a matter *now* appeals to us is our smallest concern. *Ought* it to appeal to us? *Will* it appeal to us when we know more about it? The things that most deserve assent and assistance are not always those that get them. Whether an answer of mind and heart shall be awakened usually depends upon how things look on the surface, and what knowledge, what principles or prejudices, what insight, what esthetic or moral "tastes" are found in us. If a

cause, for example, is championed by men we have been led to think narrow or ill-balanced, its appeal is discounted at once. But almost always the necessities of reform either call for a certain rugged type, or produce it. Revolutions are not wrought with rose-water. Not all wisdom's children recognize each other. The best Roman emperors, whose moral ideals approached most closely the Christian code, were the sternest enemies of the new faith. They mistook its fervor and unworldliness for wild fanaticism and "hatred of the human race." In its lowly adherents and strange doctrines there was nothing that "appealed" to them, and they never knew the real beauties of the system they spurned.

Mere esthetics sway more people than would believe it of themselves. Picturesque reforms and philanthropies win hearts which undecorated truth and right are powerless to move. When a childless husband and wife seek in an orphan asylum an object of love and care, it is not "blear-eyed Leah" who is chosen, although she may be the needier soul and the lovelier character. Imagination and fancy, not reason and conscience, too often cast the deciding vote.

And very frequently our sheer ignorance is the mother of our failure in response. Certain claims have not had, or been allowed, the chance to sink into mind and heart. One visit to the moral sewers of our great cities, one tour through the factories where the bodies and souls of childhood are bartered for a price, one fair examination of the evils of the saloon, would make enthusiasts of men and women

who now look on with cold indifference. Not "appeal to you"? One "could a tale unfold" of any one of a halfscore of reforms, which would thrill you to a fever of interest and indignation. Facts could be given concerning this man or that woman which would make you grapple them to you with hoops of steel. "Surely Jehovah is in this place, and I knew it not." But it is our business and duty to know.

Rarely does the best in life lie on the surface. Many of the truest characters are less pleasing on first acquaintance than some who have assumed a veneer of pleasing manner or bred in themselves a genuine but shallow good-nature. John Knox never could win the friends who flocked round Mary Stuart. Such souls hide their treasures. The best in them, as in anyone, must lie far within. What "appeals" most strongly at first sight is more usually the less worthy. Quartz glitters in all the glory of flawless texture and perfect facets, while the rough diamond looks like a pebble or lump of gum arabic. The wealth of any science or study is to be seen or enjoyed only after arduous search and toil. It is to be extracted by none but those who recognize its possible value and bring to it their own "chemicals" to reduce and refine it. Truth's richest food is never furnished predigested. How utterly absurd is this test of spontaneous "appeal"!

Before we accord decisive weight to the verdict of our first impressions, it might be well to know whether our own moral and spiritual state, our grade of advancement, is such that we are good judges of any

teaching, or cause, or person. Macaulay's Otaheitan cast one careless glance at the stately front of St. Paul's, and ran into a shop to play with beads. "We shall be like him; for we shall see him even as he is," has a reverse. "We shall see him as he is when we are like him." Within the two great classes of men, the "spiritual" and the unspiritual, there is almost an infinity of grades, and each will see only what he can see. Truths which once stirred every fiber have lost their grip because the man has lost his grip on the great realities. When one is very sure that "the revival has passed," perhaps it has passed—from him. And many a teaching which was cold, empty, even repulsive, to one who had not climbed up to it, glows like the cathedral windows now that he has mounted and entered. It was said of one distinguished orator, after a supposed moral lapse, that "he had abolished hell in self-defense." There are those who deny heaven, because they have not entered its earthly anterooms.

The best use of "appeal" is in its test, not so much of the things which ask our support, as of us who sit in judgment. Not Christ is being judged, but Pilate. "Here," said Thomas Carlyle to a number of art-lovers who had each been mentioning another "fact about Titian," "here's an immortal soul who does not care *that* about Titian. There's another fact about Titian."

"No," said his friend, "that's not a fact about Titian. It is a fact, and a lamentable fact, about Thomas Carlyle." Appeal is appraisal—of ourselves. Our business is not to be appealed to, but to apply.

If we test, we test only that we may extract, transform, or assist. If, after genuine effort, these prove impossible, it will be time enough then to pronounce our verdict. Until then, it is lazy, blind, conceited, and sinful to say very much about "appeal."

XXIX

THE BLESSINGS OF INERTIA

INERTIA is pretty nearly as exasperating as inconsistency, which it closely resembles. You keep firing the hot shot of your truth into the slow minds of men with about as much apparent effect as had the musketry fire of the Civil War, when, it was said, it took a ton of lead to kill a man. And when, after long and strenuous endeavor, you are sure that they not only ought to be convinced, but are, and you turn your guns elsewhere, feeling that the battle is won, and that your truth now accepted will make its own way, you are astonished to look back, a month, a year later, and find everything just where and as it was before. You have poured your energy down a rat hole. You are inclined to charge your fellow-men with glaring inconsistency. It looks extremely as if various interlocking and complicated forces had clamped these people down to that anchorage of non-progression. There must be prejudice there, timidity, pride, avarice, ambition, and probably mulishness. No doubt this is partly true, for human motives are seldom unmingled; but the force that is chiefly troubling you is not inconsistency, nor dishonesty, nor selfishness, but a certain admirable thing which is the condition of all real and permanent progress. Recognize it, understand it, and utilize it, and you can make it serve

magnificent purposes in the advance and establishment of the race. It is *inertia,* without which stability is impossible and force is inconceivable.

Inertia is that universal property of matter by which it tends to continue in the same state of rest or motion in which it is. If it is at rest, inertia requires that force be exerted to move it. If the object be in motion, force must be put forth to stop it. The amount necessary depends upon the mass or weight of the body, and the rapidity with which it moves or is desired to move. "Large bodies," we say, "move slowly"; that is to say, they *get* slowly to moving; but when they are in full swing arrest is hard and slow. Minds have what might be called bulk, weight, and speed, or energy; and every mind most emphatically has inertia, the property of keeping on as it is unless some adequate force produces a change. It will not respond to a mere order of somebody's will, somebody's else, or the man's own. It proposes either to "stay put" or keep going until something changes its status. We are chafing against the nature of things when we chafe against inertia.

And against a tremendously useful thing, too. Inertia has a wonderfully valuable educational and gymnastic effect on the man who is seeking to move things. It seems to him only a stubborn and unreasonable antagonist. "Why, oh why, when everything is proven and the 'Q. E. D.' has been said, why not be able to move on the practical or logical step that follows?" Well, such is human nature that it is rarely good to get things as quickly and easily as that. A victory so lightly won would be lightly held.

"Nawthin' cost, nawthin' vally," was the Yankee explanation of the fewness of the local visitors to the mountain glories that tourists sought from the ends of the earth. God has placed the best things in life beyond our present reach, that the toil may stimulate our appetite and our appreciation. But the exercise we get out of it is even a more valuable element. Without inertia, gymnastics could not be. The rowing machine, the horizontal bars, the swinging rings are devices for pitting muscle against the allies, gravitation and inertia. It is in the battle that muscle gets its girth. If in the moral world results came too quickly, life would lose its chief gain. Easy victory would engender conceit, imperiousness, impatience. As it is, persistence, patience, tact, faith, and love get abundance of exercise. One of the facts that puzzle some of us is that the men and women upon whom God has laid the glorious burden of some great enterprise of the kingdom have to bear also the burdens of the indifference and sluggishness, to say nothing of the opposition, of the "rank and file." But God is almost or quite as much interested in the growth we get out of doing things as in the growth others get out of our doing them. We can see the good of this struggle with the sloth once in a while, when some enterprise has easy sailing, "waxes fat," "settles on the lees," and "kicks." It is clearly divine wisdom that only through much pushing we get things to moving.

These provoking waits also provoke to reflection. Jefferson, standing before the fireplace, illustrates the function of the Senate by the saucer in which his tea

is cooling. There be those who might aver that in the light of history a *chafing-dish* were a better simile. So, in instances, with inertia. But it is often extremely fortunate that matters cannot be hurried beyond a certain speed. The measure which cannot endure considerable delay is more than under suspicion. Whatever bids us "bide a wee" is a friend, provided we do not bide too long. It takes time for tendencies to reveal themselves. The best "prophet" cannot forecast them all. Even though caution has no word to say for itself, no reason to advance except its own ingrained habit, it often halts us at the edge of a precipice; and though this time there proves to be no precipice, nothing has been lost by delay.

Inertia is absolutely indispensable to real stability and real power. If things responded to a feather touch of ours, we could expect them to respond to a feather touch of somebody else. The mercurial people who yield to every breeze are not very valuable. It is very exasperating that humanity has to wait so long before my reason and heart and will can propel it my way, or get it to stop where I direct, but that very "obstinacy" assures me that it will keep going with effect when I do get it started, or will stay where I place it. The experienced teacher sees with a tempered joy how quickly the mind and feeling of that bright boy respond to his stimuli. He fears he may see the fire die out as soon. Often it is with a certain dogged hopefulness that he sets himself to hammer at that other slow-moving consciousness, pretty sure that what he gets will abide in permanence and power. "Little pot soon hot" and soon cold. "Straightway

they sprang up, because they had no deepness of earth, and when the sun was risen, they were scorched, and because they had no root, they withered away."

Inertia is God's method of storing power. Unless the object is really clamped down—as some people are, alas—every ounce of power you put into it is released by and by in the form of energy or deposited in the form of stability, if you have kept at it continuously enough and long enough. You may be getting "hot" at the necessity of pounding, but the iron is getting hot too. There is a certain stage when the intense and incredible activity of childhood is succeeded by an almost insuperable inclination for loafing and lounging. Science now tells us that the laziness of the poor white is due not to the microbe of indolence, but to a parasite that saps the strength. She has rehabilitated the reputation of the growing boy by assuring us that the reason for this period of unlimited food consumption, in inverse proportion to his willingness to be put to any form of useful labor, is that he is absorbing energy. This slowly moving mind of the body politic is certainly absorbing your energy at a tremendous rate, and to small apparent purpose. But as you work with God, "in due season you shall reap if you faint not." Like the hundreds of heat units that have to be poured into the water at two hundred and twelve degrees before its particles will break the bands that hold them together as water, and burst into steam, your thousand hours or days or years of prayer and effort and influence and preparing for God's glorious "one day" of abiding result, nor has one hour been lost. "Wherefore be ye stead-

fast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

Are there some counterfeits of inertia where laziness, or prejudice, or sin has clamped the soul, so that in that case our labor is in vain? Undoubtedly. Are some souls so light that they cannot absorb our energy? Hardly, though there is vast difference in the weight of souls. But while even with wisely placed, love-directed, spirit-filled labor not all effects are equal, the net result shall not fail. Our chief care is to keep everlastingly at work, persistently, unremittingly, with him. Inertia is no antagonist. It is our banker, after God; and, under God, our chief ally.

EPILOGUE—BASE AND PINNACLE

XXX

CHILDLIKENESS OR CHILDISHNESS?

"EXCEPT ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." More classes than one are repelled by this saying of the Master. Proud young minds, sturdy, self-reliant natures, and older ones, conscious of the larger growth and gains of maturity, are apt to feel that it is a narrowing demand, it is asking the currents of life to flow backward. However much, in some hours, our hungry and lonely hearts may long for some things childhood had,

> "Backward, turn backward, O Time! in your flight,
> Make me a child again, just for to-night!"

we feel is a request as unworthy as it is unattainable. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things." And so many, both young and old, revolt from this demand of Jesus, but they revolt because they misunderstand it. They confuse two things that are profoundly dissimilar. They confound childishness, which Paul denounces, with childlikeness, which Jesus demands.

Jesus does not insist that we become little children. That would contravene his own laws of growth: "First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in

the ear." And the process is inconceivable without mental mutilation and intellectual suicide,—is inconceivable with them, for, if one should attempt to carve down a full-grown man to the proportions of an infant, he would have neither man nor child as the resultant.

But Jesus did insist that we become as little children, assuming not all the characteristics of childhood, but certain admirable ones which add strength and beauty to any stage.

Childlikeness is the loftiest attainment, the deepest strength, the highest charm, of Christian character. The soul which has arrived at it has not merely entered the door of the kingdom of heaven, he has not merely the germs of all development in him, and in his hand the key and clew to all advance, but he is far on his way into its deepest heart,—he is there. Childishness is a blot and a flaw, and shuts a man out of life's best things in every realm. No higher praise can be given to any man than to say that he is childlike. Hardly a severer thing can be said than that he is childish. Yet it can be said of most people, and the other—God forgive and help us!—can be said of few.

It is likeness to the child in the one admirable quality of childhood at its best, simplicity,—a trunk from which spring many beautiful branches. It is single-hearted. What would not one give for the child's power of disregarding all side issues in its absorbing pursuit of the one thing in view! It is earnest, honest, sincere, straightforward, humble, teachable, believing, obedient, pure. There are men and women, not fools by any means, not children in mind nor in knowledge, in whose presence you do not wish to utter, you dare

not utter, your sophistry, your cynicism, your impurity, any more than in the presence of a little child. There is that in them which not only will not let the world's dust and dirt cling to them, but is an atmosphere that repels such things from their presence.

The quality is consistent with the greatest learning, the greatest profundity and subtlety of mind, and the greatest force of character. It is more,—it is indispensable to these things. It is not primarily a quality of the mind, but an attitude of the will and a flavor of the spirit, yet it brings to the mind liberty and insight nowhere else obtained. In the midst of the world's false ideas of manhood and life it demands the highest possible courage, but it finds its full reward in a peace that passeth all understanding and a power that cannot be measured. The lives that have touched humanity at, and to, its highest, have had it. They have been as deep as the ocean and as transparent as a tropic sea. The truest men of science, like Agassiz and Faraday; men of letters whose charm is greatest, like Goldsmith and Irving; the loftiest seers, like John; the greatest statesmen, like Lincoln and Gladstone,—have had it in unusual degree.

It is trustful, loving, unselfish, fearless sonship in God's beautiful world of truth and force, and puts the soul into happy possession of the Father's wealth and the brother's heart. Its attitude toward man is described in the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians,—it "seeketh not its own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil"; its attitude toward things is given in the sixth chapter of Matthew,—it "seeks

first the kingdom of God and his righteousness," for it knows that "your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things"; its attitude toward God, in the fourteenth chapter of John's Gospel and the fourth chapter of his First Epistle,—"Ye believe in God, believe also in me," and "perfect love casteth out fear."

Childishness is precisely the opposite, and mars everything, however beautiful, with which it mingles. It exhibits, not the child's singleness, but his narrowness; not his forgetfulness of self, but his forgetfulness of others; not his teachableness, but his unteachable ignorance; not his absorption in the one great thing, but his proneness to mistake little things for the great things. It is petulant, irritable, self-seeking, proud, unreasoning. A child sings one song over and over till every ear but his own aches with the iterations; so does a man with a hobby or a grievance or a theory,—often, perhaps usually, a very little one. A child takes a bit of glass for a diamond, so does a man in his pursuit of money or office or popularity. A child insists on its own way simply because it is his own way; nine-tenths of the controversies of politics and science and "religion" are as reasonable in their matter and their motive. A child flings out of the circle of its playmates in a pet because its will is crossed; see Achilles on the beach shedding tears of rage, Juno nursing on Olympus her ungodlike wrath, Bismarck bewailing,—the endless procession of the "disgruntled."

These men are often great of hand and arm and head, exuberant in riches and resource, with all the

equipments of greatness but one. They are colossi —in size; but they are colossal *babies,*—"children tossed about by every wind" of self and passion. The simple-hearted child of God has grown above all that. He may not know as much, but he knows more. He has learned to put heaven above earth, growth above gain, soul above sense, and love above everything. He has put away childish things. "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." He has put on the best thing, the mature thing. "Now abideth faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love." He has reached highest rank in the kingdom of heaven. "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

XXXI

WHEN THE OLDEST ARE THE YOUNGEST

A QUAINT mystic of the latter day affirms that "the oldest angels are the youngest." The statement is beyond verifying at present, but it is an appealing paradox, even though there be no time in eternity. In some or all of the enviable qualities of youth those in the spirit-world who have lived the longest must surpass those who were summoned later into being. With them, time cannot bring decrepitude or decay; it must bring something, and that something is growth. We on earth grow old. May not those in heaven grow young?

What are some of these qualities which we may believe expand with the passing aeons of an angel's life?

As we grow old, the characteristic of youth that we most miss and regret is its abounding vigor. Labor adds vigor at first, but presently it loses its virtue, and we find that our bodies are machines in which the stored-up energy is limited. Check, guard, oil the clockwork as you will, the spring runs down at last. But in the spiritual realm exercise brings vigor without waste or decay; the heart grows strong by loving and the soul by trusting. The oldest angels have been exercising love, zeal, and purity for

aeons longer than the youngest; they are aeons stronger.

Interest and zest, fresh delight in the things he is doing, in the movement of the varied life about him, is another quality of youth that we would gladly retain. What would not the jaded man of the world give for that first fresh thrill? How some of us who are not all of the world worldly would delight if life had the savor it once had! But the longer the angel lives, the larger grows his outlook, the deeper his insight. He has been a diligent student of the mysteries of God, "which things the angels desire to look into." The longer the divine forces are at work, the clearer their working appears; each new age adds to its interest and beauty. How his heart must leap as he reads more and more plainly the thoughts of God in the advancing drama of human life! It is only the blind who is bored. The seeing is thrilled with a growing fascination.

Youth has again an interest and a pleasure in humanity at large, and in individual men and women, of which age and experience is too apt to deprive us. Our valuation of humanity becomes lower. We are more sure of human weakness, and less sure of human strength. But for all his experience of folly and sin, the older angel, with an insight surer, has had such experience of the saints of God that his life has been enriched beyond measure by the fidelity, the love, the unselfishness, the genuine values, he has found in human hearts. It must have done even an angel good to be acquainted with Isaiah and Paul and John, with Melancthon and Fénelon and Jonathan Edwards.

The little girl clapped her hands when she heard that Phillips Brooks was dead. "How glad the angels must have been when they saw him coming!" It is only a very young or a very unspiritual spirit who would say with Thomas Moore's peri:

> "'Poor race of men,' said the pitying spirit,
> 'Dearly ye pray for your primal fall.
> Some flowerets of Eden ye still inherit,
> But the trail of the serpent is over them all.'"

The oldest angel, on the contrary, holds his breath expectant in earth's foulest swamps; he looks to find at any moment one of heaven's choicest flowers blooming there. Hope grows in him with every age. Each aeon has revealed to him another facet of the manifold wisdom and the steadfast purpose of God, each decade exhibits more gloriously God's power to guide and uplift and glorify.

Who has not envied youth's genial heart and universal good-will? Each angel, no doubt, starts his spiritual life endowed with that. It is his in germ, undeepened, undeveloped. But as the ages pass, he has been steadily exercising it. He has been speeding on missions of mercy. He has been watching humanity with yearning desire for the growth of like good-will among men, he has been deep in the counsels of God, he has observed in Jesus Christ the flower and the fruit of God's timeless love, and the thrill has deepened in his heart until it dominates all others,—the thrill of that deathless love, good-will. The song the shepherds overheard was just a crumb from the heavenly feast, an echo of the unceasing song of heaven.

And simplicity of mind and heart is a child's quality which man most sadly lacks and needs. Our heavenly inhabitant may have to spend some ages, first in grasping the multitude of facts and events before him, and then in bringing them together according to God's laws of being and significance. He may be confused at first by their multiplicity, and for a while the added details may mean still more confusion. By and by he has passed that point forever. Things have begun to tell their story to him, and each added fact is not so much more to cumber, it is so much more to illumine. Age by age the array falls into fewer lines. His wisdom is vaster, but his thought is simpler; his facts are more numerous, but his formulas grow less, and he sees increasingly that "through the ages *one* increasing purpose runs."

All this sums itself up, for angel, or archangel, or seraph, in the child's absolute surrender of mind and will to its guide and ruler. They have discovered most clearly the infinite variety of their Master's wisdom and power, and their own utter dependence in wisdom and strength. They have seen so often the marvels of his grace, his divine simplicity, his "ways past searching out," that "there is no breath in them." Adoring and expectant wonder, vastly deeper even than that of the "devout astronomer," becomes their habitual attitude. What next will he have to show to the principalities and powers? If death were for them, it would seem they would

> "Expire in their rapture and wonder
> As harpstrings are broken asunder
> By music they throb to express."

Deathless, the throb of their wonder is transmuted into love and praise, and such unison with his will that they have but one wish, one longing, to be his instruments forever, voices to sound out his messages that God may be all and in all.

"Which things are an allegory." He is the oldest Christian who has lived not longest but most in Christ. His also is the timeless life, in which years bring not decay but growth. Vigor, zest, hope, good-will, simplicity, surrender, which are youth's freshest beauties, are maturity's choicest fruits. The saint reaches his summit when he becomes a little child. The oldest Christians are the youngest.

XXXII

THE MORNING AND EVENING HARP

THE normal close of human life is not a climax, but a cadence. Life's music begins in youth, like the nightingale in Tennyson's haunted valley, "with long and low preamble." It continues with increasing intensity and force through early manhood up to the prime of life, its midday. Then it moves forward on a level or slightly declining plane, with perhaps somewhat increasing force for a while, a force whose springs, however, lie back in the preceding stage, and whose activities take the directions determined then. Henceforth it slackens in intensity and movement, although not necessarily in depth or height, and by no means necessarily in beauty, for this is the season when "life takes a sober coloring from an eye that hath kept watch o'er man's mortality," and puts on ripe and tranquil graces impossible before. And then, "only waiting till the shadows are a little longer grown," the soul in quiet tarries for that season when cadences shall end, and the full-toned, ever deepening music of the eternal shall begin.

It is a beautiful picture, a beautiful song. One would not have it otherwise. Let us not complain when some young life is stopped in midcurrent of advancing melody, for God knows how to choose

and fit his heavenly choirs. Let us offer no criticism when he sees best, in the case of some strong servant of his, to substitute for the impending twilight of earth the glow of heaven's morning. We can see a grandeur in that sudden transfer to the larger sphere, great as was the place that was filled on earth. And yet we recognize the complete and tender beauty of this other song. The glory of the mellow sunset, so often almost indistinguishable, balances the glory of the eager morning. Each part, like Emerson's shell and seaweed, in its place is best. Each is as significant and as beautiful as the other. Think not that the slackening energies and soberer pulses are an evil thing; they are the sweet-toned echoes of past music, the pause before the heavenly symphonies. Shakespeare's "Seven Ages" are the worldling's picture of the cycle of human life. One could wish that some poet of the deeper humanity, with Shakespeare's mighty mind and facile hand, but with a greater than his power of insight and comprehension, might tell the story as he sees it under the sky above us, in the light of the heaven beyond us. The lame and impotent conclusion of the "lean and slippered pantaloon," "sans eyes, sans teeth, sans everything," has no place beside this picture of the tranquil eventide "when there shall be light."

But for us the significance of the fact of the cadence lies in the relations of its different parts, in the truth that each note in the closing measures is the direct descendant of its predecessors, and they of theirs. The keynote was struck in youth, and while rude hands of sin too often play havoc later with the gra-

cious melody thus begun, full, normal manhood is simply the louder, deeper vibration of the earlier chords, and old age carries on the same prevailing air and ruling *motif*. That last music, indeed, is not possible without the first. No doubt the heavenly Master can take the harp all unused to celestial tones, and with many a string destroyed, and call forth strains which shall make angels wonder and all heaven rejoice; but even he, we may reverently say, cannot evoke the music that might have sounded from its strings if through all the years they had grown wonted to the finer melodies. In each present note that sounds, all notes that have been are resounding, and if the higher music has been lacking in the past, the song, however sweet, lacks the richness it might have had. The tranquil march of age is moving to the measures it learned in manhood and in youth.

And therefore the character of the earlier music, whether marked by adequacy, redundancy, or defect, molds all the later. The later simply expands and develops the earlier. This furnishes the central tone which has attracted to itself and ranged round it the kindred notes; this has been the dominating power which selected out of life's materials the congenial elements and transmuted them into its own likeness.

To change the figure for a moment, it is not possible, from our human standpoint at least, to insert into the soul's warp and woof when the fabric is nearly woven, or even well-blocked out, the lacking threads of gold. Late-won polish soon wears off, late-won culture proves itself to be but superficial, late-won virtue has a hard struggle with long-seated passion, and the

noble songs our minds have learned in maturer years are but evanescent; what remains are tunes which sank into the heart in youth, and those which vibrate in unison with them. Make what allowances we may for the transmuting power of development, allow that many of the things in youth that grate upon our nerves and offend our senses are but the acidity and the hardness of the apple incidental to its growth, look with confidence for time and sun and rain to mellow its crass juices into sweetness, consider that there must be a certain necessary shrillness and incoherence in the tones of youth which only time and use can deepen and relate, allow for all external influences that tend to heighten and enrich, nor forget the exceeding power of the grace of God,—yet the fact remains that in chief measure as the harp resounds in the morning, so shall it sing at night.

In this lies the significance and the encouragement of all work for the young. It seems so disappointing, so crass and crude and little, this drilling of high thoughts but feebly understood into thoughtless minds, this training of inept hands in movements which to them as yet "little meaning, little relevancy bear," this reiteration of noble sentiments to those who for long are silent to our singing, and, when the notes do begin to come, seem to utter them forth with but parrot iteration,—this seems, it is true, so trifling and so petty; but we are training earth's most glorious singers; we are striking the keynotes of a whole lifetime of music; we are molding and coloring manhood's deep and thrilling tones; we are directing the rich, sweet music of the sunset hours; we are shap-

ing the whole soaring, glorious, tender cadence of human life; we are preparing for the climax of eternity.

Who at such a task could not be hopeful, patient, content? The notes are yet but shrill; and a hundred times we sound the right one only to hear the same false tone repeated; but when once the right tone is caught and woven by love and habit and the spirit of God into the very chords of life, its echoes shall be eternal.

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